



Field Guides Tour Report

Maine Audubon in Oaxaca 2019

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



One of the many habitats we enjoyed on our recent Oaxaca tour was the oasis of Presa Piedra Azul above the historic town of Teotitlán. It hosted many egrets, shorebirds, and even a sharp Green Kingfisher. Photo by guide Doug Hitchcox.

Known for its great birds, authentic food, and amazing human history, Oaxaca is the complete package! We enjoyed aspects of all of those and all from the comfort of just one hotel nestled in the city of Oaxaca. Our day trips visited vastly different habitats, from the dry washes downslope to the pristine pine forests at 10,000 feet. It was a great trip complete with nice weather, cooperative birds, a fun bunch of birders!

Our first day took us to the dry agricultural fields below Teotitlán where we got our first taste of Boucard's Wren, Gray-breasted Woodpecker, and a variety of kingbirds and sparrows. Presa Piedra Azul had some water and thus attracted a variety of swallows, herons, shorebirds, and even some special goodies like Say's Phoebe, Painted Bunting, and MacGillivray's Warbler. Farther up the slope, we connected with Collared Towhee, a variety of brushfinches, Brown-backed Solitaires, warblers, and much more!

The next morning found us at Pollo Niño as the sun rose. The sounds of Greater Pewees cascaded down the slopes as we added to our list with Blue Mockingbird, Gray Silky-flycatcher, Red-headed Tanager, and many others. Up at La Cumbre, we saw our first Red Crossbill, Black-headed Siskin, and Steller's Jay before we ventured farther up into the pine forests. The Cabeza de Vaca trail was bustling with activity and we had a fun encounter with Gray-barred Wren, Red Warbler, Dwarf Jay, Crescent-chested Warbler, and Russet Nightingale-Thrush. After our picnic lunch, we encountered more specialties like Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Elegant Euphonia, and Slate-throated Redstarts. What a fun second day!

Instead of driving up into the mountains the next morning, we actually drove downhill out of the valley down to the KM 77 wash where we spent the morning. Here we found a very different array of species and highlights were numerous; White-throated Magpie-Jay, Orange-breasted Bunting, Varied Bunting, Green-fronted Hummingbird, Plain-capped Starthroat, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Rufous-naped Wren, and even a day-singing Buff-collared Nightjar! Whew! Later that morning we had a wonderful encounter with a tame Lesser Roadrunner! Lunch at Rancho Zapata and the mezcal tour was relaxed and informative. That afternoon, we had a great tour of Mitla with our local guide and driver Jorge, and we capped things off with some birding along the entrance road to Yagul. We added the tiny and uncommon Beautiful Hummingbird which was an excellent way to finish out the day.

The following day took us to the famed Monte Albán which was a treat in so many ways. We started by birding the trail along the entrance area which was really productive in the cooler hours of the morning. It was there that we somehow connected with one of the most uncommon and skulky residents, the Ocellated Thrasher! Wow! We also added goodies like Pileated Flycatcher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Rufous-capped Warbler, Virginia's Warbler, and others. Jorge gave us a great tour of Monte Albán although it was hard to pay attention with a Zone-tailed Hawk wafting overhead, Rock Wrens poking around at our feet, White-tailed Hawks, and a Yellow Grosbeak that showed up! That evening, we ascended the slopes to La Cumbre where we switched things up a bit. We had a picnic dinner at 9990 feet as the sun set. It wasn't long until we started hearing Mexican Whip-poor-will's calling off through the dusk. On our way down the mountain, we successfully found a fun pair of Fulvous Owls and even a cute little Whiskered Screech-Owl as well.

We birded our way up towards La Cumbre the next morning stopping at Pollo Niño and the Oaxaca Sparrow spot. Thankfully, as the light started hitting the slopes and it started warming up, the sparrows started coming out of the woodwork and we ended up with great looks at this rare and local Mexican endemic. Woodhouse's Scrub-Jays, Lincoln's Sparrows, and a Hepatic Tanager also kept us company. Higher up by the ridge, we birded the Yuvilla Road which took us east from the rest area. It was great birding the higher elevations again because we finally netted Northern Pygmy-Owl and of course a couple of Mountain Trogons! The Gray-barred Wrens, Gray Silky-flycatchers, and Golden-browed Warblers all kept us company as Slate-

throated Redstarts flitted below us. Lunch at the beautiful Colibri Restaurant was punctuated by a close Blue-throated Hummingbird and some fantastic authentic food!

Our final morning took us back to the Teotitlán area. We added Belted Kingfisher and Blue-winged Teal at the reservoir, West Mexican Chachalaca and Dwarf Vireo at a switchback uphill from there, and a high flock of Chestnut-collared Swifts. Calling from the slopes was a Thick-billed Kingbird, Nutting's Flycatcher, and Western Wood-Pewee. Farther uphill we had more encounters with White-eared Hummingbird, Blue Mockingbird, and a sneaky White-striped Woodcreeper before we turned and headed down to town for lunch. The Mendoza sisters put on a great authentic meal and weaving demonstration which really was a perfect ending to our trip.

I'd like to thank Doug Hitchcox for all his help and together with Maine Audubon for making this trip possible. Of course, our local guide Yuca was indispensable for his logistical support and wealth of knowledge! Sharon with our home office in Austin did an amazing job with getting all this prepped and a major shout-out goes to her for her help. Our drivers, Alex and Jorge, were reliable, helpful, and a big thanks goes to them as well. And of course, thanks to you all for coming along on this Maine Audubon Field Guides trip to Oaxaca! I know I enjoyed myself along with Doug and Yuca and we hope you did too!

With fond memories of the moles, beautiful birds, and a fun bunch of people, good birding to owl of you. :-)

-- 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*) – We came across a few of these dabblers on our final morning when we visited Presa Piedra Azul above Teotitlán.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

WEST MEXICAN CHACHALACA (*Ortalis poliocephala*) – It wasn't until our final morning above Teotitlán but we eventually snagged this sneaky endemic. Thankfully, they perched out in the open for all of us to enjoy! [E]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – The reservoir above Teotitlán, Presa Piedra Azul, hosted a tightly-packed flock of these tiny grebes on both of our visits.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Tallied every day, usually in urban areas. [I]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – In this part of Mexico, this big pigeon is a montane species and we only saw them higher up at spots above Teotitlán and the La Cumbre area.

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Fairly common in the valley bottom. These are tiny, scaly-looking doves with fairly long tails.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Not abundant on this tour, these short-tailed doves were seen just a few times at spots like the KM 77 wash and on the trail near Monte Albán.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – Although they're often tough to see, the low, mournful songs of this forest species followed us to places like the trail near Monte Albán. Some folks got a quick glimpse along the KM 77 wash as well.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant in a variety of habitats and we tallied them every day of tour.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Not as common in Oaxaca as many of us are used to from farther north! We encountered these just a few times including the roadside below Teotitlán.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

LESSER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx velox*) – Wow, what a show! The quiet road leading up to the microwave towers after the KM 77 walk yielded this treasure. Not only that, but it was a fairly calm and tame individual and we got stellar views!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

BUFF-COLLARED NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus ridgwayi*) – Certainly one of the most surprising birds of the entire tour, one of these spontaneously sang a couple of times up the KM 77 wash! [*]

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrostomus arizonae*) – Our night adventure up on the slopes of Cerro San Felipe netted us this fun nightbird. At one point, one of these flew overhead and we were able to get a quick glimpse in the spotlight.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHESTNUT-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne rutula*) – We encountered a high flock of swifts above a ridge near Teotitlán on our final morning. Later review of the photos confirmed something pretty cool, these were Chestnut-collared Swifts! Not a species we typically see on this tour, it's likely that they had just arrived for the spring.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

PLAIN-CAPPED STARTRHROAT (*Heliomaster constantii*) – We couldn't have asked for a better show from these hummingbirds! We found these well up the KM 77 wash near where we turned around. We were able to watch through the scope as they perched, preened, and even dozed off. What a fantastic encounter.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – The only hummingbird feeders we saw all week, the ones at the Colibri Restaurant, were hosting this big highland species.

BEAUTIFUL HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax pulcher*) – This is a very tough endemic to find but the entrance road to Yagul proved once again to be somewhat reliable for this tiny hummingbird. Great spotting by Peggy! [E]

BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus platycercus*) – It was a quick look but one of these was spotted feeding at roadside flowers up in the La Cumbre area near 9000 feet in elevation.

DUSKY HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus sordidus*) – Maybe it's not the flashiest hummingbird in the world but we still appreciated them! This species is only found in Mexico and we were happy to have them even at the hotel grounds in Oaxaca! [E]

BERYLLINE HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia beryllina*) – This attractive species was fairly common at the hotel grounds and then again around Presa Piedra Azul above Teotitlán. There, we had nice looks as one fed in a flowering tree.

GREEN-FRONTED HUMMINGBIRD (CINNAMON-SIDED) (*Amazilia viridifrons wagneri*) – This white-breasted species is a fun endemic that we encountered only once, during our walk up the KM 77 wash. They tended to stay fairly high up the canyon walls on our visit. [E]

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – A beautiful hummingbird with a bright red bill, these were usually the most common hummingbirds we had at higher elevations on tour. Spots like La Cumbre and the upper reaches above Teotitlán hosted a few.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Present on both of our visits to Presa Piedra Azul.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – A couple of these plovers dotted the shoreline at Presa Piedra Azul on our visits there.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Although they were fairly distant, the tiny little sandpipers at Presa Piedra Azul were this species.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – With the behavioral bobbing, these medium-sized sandpipers stood out at Presa Piedra Azul, even at a distance.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – This big white heron was spotted on both of our visits to Presa Piedra Azul.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Dainty and attractive, this sharp egret was also spotted at Presa Piedra Azul on both of our visits.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – A lone adult was seen at Presa Piedra Azul both times.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Not restricted to the water at the reservoir, this small white egret was spotted several times along the roadsides, often in grassy pastures alongside cattle.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures).

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Fairly common, tallied nearly every day.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Abundant and tallied daily.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – A graceful black-and-white raptor. We tallied these a few days, often in the valley along the highway.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – This Accipiter species was seen on several days but usually not in view for long. These small and agile hawks specialize in catching small birds.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – A little bigger than the previous species, this Accipiter was seen on the final day above Teotitlán.

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) – It was great getting to see this interesting species a couple of times. The first was a young bird overhead at Mitla and then we had a couple more at Monte Albán the following day.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – What a beautiful look we had at Monte Albán! We watched as one made several passes right overhead. Remember to pay attention to all those vultures!

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Fairly common and widespread. In fact, we tallied at least one every day.

Strigidae (Owls).

WHISKERED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops trichopsis*) – For those who came out for the owling adventure, our last stop coming down the mountain yielded a fantastic look at this little owl. What a little cutie!

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (MOUNTAIN) (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*) – It's usually not easy to lay eyes on these small, diurnal hunters. However, luck was with us and we eventually connected with one in the forests near La Cumbre high above Oaxaca City.

FULVOUS OWL (*Strix fulvescens*) – It was a very special treat to be in the presence of these fascinating and little-known owls high up near La Cumbre on our owling adventure. In fact, they were unknown from this far north up until 10-15 years ago.

Trogonidae (Trogons).

MOUNTAIN TROGON (*Trogon mexicanus*) – After many tries we finally had a wonderful show by a couple of trogons! Whew! And what a spectacular bird too!

Momotidae (Motmots).

RUSSET-CROWNED MOTMOT (*Momotus mexicanus*) – Try as we might, we never could lay eyes on the singing motmot tucked way back in along the KM 77 wash. [*]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers).

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – Although very familiar to many of us from farther north, this species isn't seen on every tour in Oaxaca. We were treated to one at Presa Piedra Azul on our 2nd and last visit there.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – A small and attractive kingfisher, one of these was at Presa Piedra Azul on our very first morning. Turns out, that would be our only sighting of the trip.

Picidae (Woodpeckers).

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – Although never a common species for us, a couple of these wintering woodpeckers were seen in the forests at medium and high elevations.

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Strangely absent for us, only one of these was detected and it was heard-only above Teotitlán.

[*]

GRAY-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes hypopolius*) – A beautiful and endemic woodpecker, these specialties were seen on our very first morning below Teotitlán. Turns out, we'd see them a few more times including at Rancho Zapata during lunch. [E]

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (WEST MEXICO) (*Melanerpes aurifrons polygrammus*) – The only spot we encountered these was the KM 77 wash where they were fairly common alongside the previous species. This is the same species that reaches north into Texas and Oklahoma.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates scalaris*) – Although uncommon, a couple were heard and then seen at spots like the Pollo Niño area and KM 77.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (SOUTH MEXICAN) (*Dryobates villosus jardinii*) – In this part of their range, this is a montane woodpecker. We found them both times we went up to the La Cumbre area.

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus mexicanus*) – It was rather odd not to see these but we did hear them a couple of times.

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Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – A distinctive raptor, it was always neat to see these soaring around and perching on cacti in the Oaxaca Valley.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – This small falcon was seen a couple of times along the highway, often perching on power-lines.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – A few folks caught a glimpse of one high up above Presa Piedra Azul on our first day.

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers).

WHITE-STRIPED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes leucogaster*) – This endemic species sure gave us the run-around! We finally caught a quick look near our picnic lunch spot above Teotitlán. Whew. [E]

SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER (NORTHERN) (*Lepidocolaptes affinis affinis*) – We had nice views of this on back-to-back days; first during the evening at La Cumbre and then the following morning along the Yuvilla Road.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers).

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – A tiny flycatcher with a bushy crest. Doug even spotted an out-of-place one right at the front drive of the hotel!

PILEATED FLYCATCHER (*Xenotriccus mexicanus*) – A smart-looking flycatcher, this endemic even sports a spiky crest. We had close views of this specialty along the trail near Monte Albán. [E]

TUFTED FLYCATCHER (MEXICAN) (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus phaeocercus*) – A cinnamon-colored flycatcher with a nice, distinct crest. These were fairly common at a couple of spots like Rio Verde and other switchbacks up at elevation.

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – We had a great time with this pewee, a chunky flycatcher with a blocky head and big bill. These were common (and even singing) at spots like Pollo Niño and other forests up above the valley.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) – Not usually a species we see on this tour, these had moved in just in the previous couple of days from farther south. There was no doubt about it though; we had singing birds at various locations and had nice scope views of them above Teotitlán.

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – This migrant was seen briefly as we walked up the dry wash at KM 77.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – This Empid was tallied twice; first near Pollo Niño where one was seen nicely in the sun, and then again along a switchback above Teotitlán.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Somewhat similar to the previous species, this small Empid is usually found feeding lower than Hammond's (but not always!). We were able to appreciate the short primary wing projection on one above Teotitlán which was nice to see. We tallied it again up the KM 77 wash.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – These were quite vocal for us on this trip which was a nice treat because they're usually pretty rare. Our best looks came from the trail at Pollo Niño.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Fairly common around water, especially at Presa Piedra Azul.

SAY'S PHOEBE (*Sayornis saya*) – A rare bird this late in the spring, it was a treat to see one through the scope at Presa Piedra Azul on our first day.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A spectacular bird to have around us on a daily basis! These vibrant flycatchers were tallied every day including right at our hotel around the pool.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Although we heard these more than we saw them, they were in fact rather common in the forests above the valley. Switchbacks above Teotitlán gave us a few looks as they squabbled in the treetops above us.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – We could appreciate the pale throats on these along the KM 77 wash. That location was the only one we tallied this wintering species at.

NUTTING'S FLYCATCHER (NUTTING'S) (*Myiarchus nuttingi inquietus*) – It was somewhat strange to find this bird along a switchback well above Teotitlán but the calls made it easy to identify.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (ARIZONA) (*Myiarchus tyrannulus magister*) – We encountered a few of these up the KM 77 wash and could appreciate the burry calls and their big bills.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – A fun (and vocal) species we encountered on several of our days including right around the hotel. Fond of wetter areas, these were mostly absent from the dry forests on our tour.

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (SOCIAL) (*Myiozetetes similis pallidiventris*) – Not an abundant species on this tour, the best views of this "miniature kiskadee" were of one above Presa Piedra Azul.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – A common species on the grounds of the hotel.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Our very first stop netted this handsome kingbird in the lowlands below Teotitlán. We went on to tally these on most of our days.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – Our only encounter was of a calling bird at a switchback above Teotitlán. Through the scope, we could see the big bill when it turned its head.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies).

ROSE-THROATED BECARD (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – At least one or two were present as we looked at the wrens and jays along the Cabeza de Vaca trail. Typically a rare bird on this tour, it was great to see this Tityridae.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

CHESTNUT-SIDED SHRIKE-VIREO (*Vireolanius melitophrys*) – The distinctive song of this big vireo cascaded down the slopes above Teotitlán but the bird itself remained hidden. [E*]

GOLDEN VIREO (*Vireo hypochryseus*) – There was a very brief view for a couple folks at Pollo Niño on our second day but that was our only sighting. [E]

SLATY VIREO (*Vireo brevipennis*) – It turned out that it was pretty easy to hear this fancy vireo and we encountered them at spots like Pollo Niño, the microwave towers, and at Monte Albán. Despite all this, they always remained just out of sight. [E*]

DWARF VIREO (*Vireo nelsoni*) – Strikingly similar to Ruby-crowned Kinglet, this little endemic vireo was seen nicely along a switchback above Teotitlán on our final morning. [E]

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Fairly common in the forests around La Cumbre and higher up above Teotitlán. The song consists of the same vireo-like note repeated monotonously. These are pretty plain in color and may also remind you of a kinglet.

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – We had a quick look at Pollo Niño on our second day. Similar to the Blue-headed Vireos from farther east, these were once considered part of the same species (Solitary Vireo).

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – Our only encounter was of one along the entrance trail near Monte Albán. The brighter colors on the head and flanks along with the sharper demarcation between the throat and face were good clues.

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – This is one of the three species that was once part of the Solitary Vireo complex. This plain-gray version was tallied a couple of times from dry pine forests on our trip.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Fairly common in a variety of habitats, these were tallied every day.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

DWARF JAY (*Cyanolyca nanus*) – One of the rarest and range-restricted jays, this was a real treat and highlight of the tour. We had fantastic luck a couple of times including at the Cabeza de Vaca trail and then again along the road near the corral area. [E]

WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY (*Calocitta formosa*) – Goodness, now this is a proper jay! A large jay with a long tail and a cute plume. A flock of these came in around us along the KM 77 wash.

STELLER'S JAY (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Cyanocitta stelleri coronata*) – Deeper blue than the ones we have in the US, this handsome jay was seen a few times in the higher-elevation forests around La Cumbre.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (SUMICHRAST'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii sumichrasti*) – Our first look at this jay was way downslope at the microwave towers. We went on to see them even better though at the Pollo Niño area and just uphill from the Oaxaca Sparrow spot. Note the subspecies; it's possible this could get split out into its own species someday.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Although never common, this big corvid was seen on more than half of our days.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – One of our most common swallows on this trip, these were common around spots like Presa Piedra Azul and our hotel in Oaxaca.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Another fairly common swallow, these were encountered mostly around Presa Piedra Azul and other spots higher up in the mountains.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A rather uncommon species on this itinerary, a few were seen migrating over Mitla.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – The only chickadee found in this part of Mexico, these were seen in the pine forests around La Cumbre on our second day.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSH TIT (MELANOTIS GROUP) (*Psaltriparus minimus melanotis*) – Seemingly always in a strung-out flock, moving from tree to tree, these small gray songbirds were seen a few times including at Yagul and switchbacks above Teotitlán.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis mexicana*) – The nuthatches here, which are also at their southern limit, always seem to behave a bit differently, a bit more skulky. We heard a few once or twice on our final day but never could get a glimpse! [E*]

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA) (*Certhia americana alticola*) – Seen on two different days, first around La Cumbre and the Cabeza de Vaca trail, and then again high above Teotitlán.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – It's amazing to think that even hundreds of years ago, this charismatic species foraged within Monte Albán and Mitla just like they did on our trip! We even found adults visiting a nest at Monte Albán which was an excellent find. [N]

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – The cascading song of this rock-loving wren reached us along the entrance road to Yagul. However, we were a little too far from the rock face to catch a glimpse. [E*]

HOUSE WREN (BROWN-THROATED) (*Troglodytes aedon brunneicollis*) – This buffy-breasted subspecies was seen nicely at elevation along the Cabeza de Vaca trail and then again along the Yuvilla Road. Although a fairly distinct subspecies, it's not thought to be split out anytime soon.

BEWICK'S WREN (MEXICANUS GROUP) (*Thryomanes bewickii mexicanus*) – A common sound at our hotel grounds and a variety of other habitats. Our best views may have been from our first day right outside our rooms.

GRAY-BARRED WREN (*Campylorhynchus megalopterus*) – Although in the *Campylorhynchus* genus, this big wren prefers treetops where they join in with mixed flocks. We had nice looks on two of our days in the La Cumbre area. Sometimes, the rare Dwarf Jays would hang out in the same flock! [E]

RUFIOUS-NAPED WREN (SCLATER'S) (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha humilis*) – The only spot we hoped to find this was at the KM 77 wash. Thankfully, we did manage glimpses of a pair as they scolded us from the tops of some cacti. This attractive wren is found south into Costa Rica.

BOUCARD'S WREN (*Campylorhynchus jocosus*) – Ooh la la! This bold wren has a very limited distribution and seeing them on this tour is always a highlight! We encountered them on our first day in the lowlands below Teotitlán. Turns out, that would be our only showing from this chunky wren. [E]

GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Henicorhina leucophrys mexicana*) – What a fantastic show! We lined up along the roadside way up around La Cumbre and watched as this skulky little wren came in and bopped back and forth in front of us. Keep tabs on this subspecies, it could be split as a separate species in the future.

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers).

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila caerulea*) – This tiny gray and black bird was spotted just a few times; first around Pollo Niño and then again at the Colibri lunch stop.

WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila albiloris*) – As expected, the KM 77 wash was the only spot we encountered this species. We all had nice looks as a pair or two foraged close at hand.

Regulidae (Kinglets).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Familiar to many birders from farther north in the US, this little ball of energy was seen nicely on our first day along a switchback above Teotitlán.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).

BROWN-BACKED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes occidentalis*) – This tour has the distinct honor of getting to witness one of the best songsters in the bird world. This species has a wonderfully spiraling song that was commonly heard up in the mountains on this trip. We caught sight of them a few times too but really it's the song to remember!

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – A very sneaky thrush, one of these was seen by a few people at Pollo Niño. For the rest of us, we settled with hearing the beautiful and flutey song.

RUSSET NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus occidentalis*) – We couldn't have asked for a better show as these were seen right on the path up around the Cabeza de Vaca trail. [E]

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – You never know where this migrant is going to pop up. For us, one showed up at Pollo Niño, La Cumbre, and near the Oaxaca Sparrow spot.

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – Common on the hotel grounds. [I]

AMERICAN ROBIN (MIGRATORIUS GROUP) (*Turdus migratorius phillipsi*) – The American Robins in Oaxaca, the most southerly in the world, are specialists of the high elevation pine forests. We encountered them just a few times at spots around La Cumbre.

RUFOUS-BACKED ROBIN (*Turdus rufopalliatus*) – Wow, even the robins feeding around our hotel were beautiful endemics! Even though they were sometimes sneaky, I think everyone ended up with nice looks at this species. [E]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).

BLUE MOCKINGBIRD (*Melanotis caerulescens*) – Even though they're typically very difficult to see, we had great luck with this big, dark mockingbird. We saw them around Presa Piedra Azul, Pollo Niño, and switchbacks above Teotitlán. This species is only found in Mexico. [E]

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (CURVIROSTRE GROUP) (*Toxostoma curvirostre curvirostre*) – It was a treat having a pair of these right on the hotel grounds where they were building a nest in a cactus along the back wall. We saw them at other spots too, though. We had one in the scope at Presa Piedra Azul and the morning light on it was fantastic.

OCELLATED THRASHER (*Toxostoma ocellatum*) – Luck was on our side when it came to this skulky species! I couldn't believe my eyes when we connected with one of these singing near Monte Albán. We all got amazing scope views before it hopped out into the open even more! Not only that, but we went on to see several more on that walk. This was the best encounter I'd ever had with this endemic specialty. [E]

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Seen a few times including our first morning below Teotitlán.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits).

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – A couple of these were found foraging along the water's edge at Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning.

Bombycillidae (Waxwings).

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – The numbers of this wintering species vary from year to year and this winter seemed to be good for them; we connected with a few flocks but mostly as flyovers.

Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers).

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER (*Ptiliogonys cinereus*) – A fan favorite and for good reason, this is a beautiful resident of the mountains in Oaxaca. The long tail, spiky crest, and flocking behavior made for one entertaining species! We enjoyed extended looks at spots like Pollo Niño where they were abundant.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler).

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Now split out from the other warblers, this species finds itself in a family of its own. Very tied to the pines up at elevation, this species was seen well in the La Cumbre area a couple times.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).

ELEGANT EUPHONIA (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – Picked as a favorite by several people, this is a beautiful little species very tied to mistletoe. We encountered them on more than half of our days at spots like Pollo Niño and above Teotitlán.

HOUSE FINCH (COMMON) (*Haemorhous mexicanus roseipectus*) – Tallied every day, often right at our hotel, this endemic subspecies is very bright indeed!

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra stricklandi*) – Doug picked out this distinctive finch more than once in the La Cumbre area. It's not a bad bird to have around while we stretch our legs at the ridgetop pitstop!

BLACK-HEADED SISKIN (*Spinus notatus*) – This nice little finch was seen by a few folks at the ridgetop rest area on our first visit to the La Cumbre area.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Fairly common in the Oaxaca Valley and we found these dark-backed finches on most of our days.

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows).

BRIDLED SPARROW (*Peucaea mystacalis*) – A stunner of a sparrow! This specialty is limited in distribution but we had nice looks at Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning. Turns out, we'd see them again on our final morning above Teotitlán as well. [E]

- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – A few of these big-billed sparrows perched up in a bush for us on our first morning below Teotitlán. Those were our only of the trip.
- CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – A few of these hopped among the Oaxaca Sparrows at our special spot towards the end of the trip. Their presence may have been a little overshadowed.
- CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*) – Good but brief views were had at our first stop on our first morning, in the valley below Teotitlán.
- LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Fairly common in the grassy areas below Teotitlán on our first day. We saw even larger flocks around Presa Piedra Azul where they lined the roads alongside Indigo Buntings.
- CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH (CHESTNUT-CAPPED)** (*Arremon brunneinucha suttoni*) – Uphill from Teotitlán, one of these scratched around among the leaf-litter down a slope. Although the views were distant, we were able to confirm the identity.
- YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – A couple of these high-elevation specialists were seen near La Cumbre, usually on the ground alongside the roads.
- LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – A number of these finely-marked sparrows were seen alongside the Oaxaca and Chipping sparrows on our second to last day.
- WHITE-THROATED TOWHEE** (*Melospiza albicollis*) – This common endemic was tallied every day and from a variety of habitats. It's a good sign when specialists like this are seen right from the hotel! [E]
- RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – We had nice looks at this species from the trail near the Monte Albán entrance.
- OAXACA SPARROW** (*Aimophila notosticta*) – One of the most range-restricted of the endemics we saw, this species ended up giving us a great show at a spot uphill from Pollo Niño. A tough sparrow to see well, these were found just that one time. [E]
- SPOTTED TOWHEE (MACULATUS GROUP)** (*Pipilo maculatus oaxacae*) – We only managed a very brief encounter as one flew across the road near the microwave towers. We heard them a few more times as well though.
- COLLARED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo ocai*) – A very attractive endemic towhee! We had a slam dunk with one uphill from Teotitlán on our very first morning. We even managed to get the singing bird in the scope for everyone to enjoy. [E]
- RUFIOUS-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH** (*Atlapetes pileatus*) – We ended up seeing 3-4 of these around the Rio Verde corner up above Teotitlán. This species, which is only found in Mexico, is a fairly distinctive specialty with bright yellow underparts. [E]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

- EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – A few of this grassland-loving species were seen (and heard) on our very first morning in the open pastures below Teotitlán.
- BLACK-VENTED ORIOLE** (*Icterus wagleri*) – A big and handsome oriole, these were seen nicely at Pollo Niño, Presa Piedra Azul, and the bridge just uphill from there.
- STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus pustulatus*) – The KM 77 wash hosted several of these and everyone ended up with good looks. Typically, this is the only spot we see this species on this itinerary.
- BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – The flowering trees at Pollo Niño on our second morning hosted a couple of these wintering orioles.
- AUDUBON'S ORIOLE (DICKEY'S)** (*Icterus graduacauda dickeyae*) – After hearing them at a couple of stops, we finally caught up to some above Teotitlán! Although this species spans to the north into Texas, the "Dickey's" subspecies in this part of Mexico is very different.
- BLACK-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus abeillei*) – Only a couple of folks with Jorge managed a quick look at this bird along the entrance road to Yagul. Unfortunately, it stayed pretty well hidden. [E]
- SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) – An oriole that Doug spotted perched in a pine high above us at La Cumbre was probably this species. It didn't stay put too long though and only a couple folks got a glimpse.
- BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Thick-necked and with a red eye, these almost have a demonic look about them! We saw these at the hotel, Presa Piedra Azul, and a few other spots.
- BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*) – Although actually a fairly hard bird to find in the area, we lucked out and found this familiar species twice! Our best looks came from Presa Piedra Azul.
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common and seen daily.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – One of these limb-creeping warblers was seen along the trail near Monte Albán during our morning walk.
- CRESCENT-CHESTED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis superciliosa*) – This isn't a warbler you're likely to see in the US and so it was a treat to be around so many! The pine forests around La Cumbre were very good for these and the Cabeza de Vaca trail in particular hosted at least a dozen.
- ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Although not the flashiest of warblers, these migrants were still enjoyed at spots like Monte Albán and the Colibri lunch stop.
- NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – The best location for this wintering species was actually the hotel grounds where we'd often see nearly a dozen on any particular walk.
- VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – It didn't stick around for long but I think we all got a look at this species along the trail outside of Monte Albán. The yellow undertail and bright white eyering were good fieldmarks.
- MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – This was a fun bird! One of these sneaky warblers was skulking around below us at the bridge just uphill from Presa Piedra Azul. We could even see the gray hood and white arcs around the eyes.
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – There were plenty of these on our trip and we ended up seeing them every day in a variety of habitats.
- BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – This western warbler was seen three times over two days and all happened to be uphill from Teotitlán; first at the bridge and then a couple more at switchbacks farther uphill.
- TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – A handsome western warbler, these were seen several times in the pine and oak forests around La Cumbre and above Teotitlán. The black face masks were usually obvious and helped separate them from the following species.
- HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Like the previous species, these were usually seen higher up in forests on our trip. However, these have a very blank-looking yellow face and head.
- RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (RUFIFRONS GROUP)** (*Basileuterus rufifrons rufifrons*) – A very attractive warbler that we encountered in scrubby habitat at Presa Piedra Azul, Monte Albán, Yagul, and several other spots.

- GOLDEN-BROWED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus belli*) – Wow, now this was a fancy warbler! Although not endemic to Mexico, it nearly is. We had fantastic looks high up around La Cumbre where they would sometimes forage alongside Red Warblers.
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A fairly common species in a variety of habitats including right at the hotel.
- RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – This local wintering species was seen on just one day, the first day when we visited the switchbacks above Teotitlán. It's a stunner though and usually one of the favorites.
- RED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubra*) – Without a doubt, this beautiful Mexican endemic was one of the main stars of our tour. We enjoyed repeated looks around La Cumbre where these little gems foraged around us. [E]
- PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – At least one of these tricolored warblers was seen by our picnic lunch stop above Teotitlán. It was strange though that we didn't encounter more.
- SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus miniatus*) – A cute little warbler that we encountered a few times in the forests above Teotitlán and La Cumbre. Unlike like the previous redstart, this species lacks the white slash in the wing.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

- HEPATIC Tanager (NORTHERN)** (*Piranga flava hepatica*) – We saw a dull reddish male at the Oaxaca Sparrow spot. We saw a few more higher up including a close female at the Rio Verde switchback.
- SUMMER Tanager** (*Piranga rubra*) – One at Pollo Niño showed nicely in the tree next to the pull-out.
- WESTERN Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Although one of the best spots for this handsome tanager was at the hotel, we saw more at locations like Pollo Niño and the bridge above Presa Piedra Azul.
- RED-HEADED Tanager** (*Piranga erythrocephala*) – This was a special treat and not a species we see very often on this tour. This newly-arrived spring migrant was spotted in a treetop at Pollo Niño on our second day. Fantastic! [E]
- YELLOW GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus chrysopleus*) – This stunner was one of the most unexpected species on the entire trip! Peggy picked out this distant bird at Monte Albán and, as luck would have it, it flew right towards us and landed nearby! This is the first time we've ever seen this species on one of these Oaxaca tours.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A very nice male was feeding right above us at Monte Albán during our tour there.
- BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – The western counterpart of the previous species, this handsome grosbeak was spotted a few times including nicely at the bridge above Presa Piedra Azul, Pollo Niño, and switchbacks above Teotitlán.
- BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – Our very first stop of the trip yielded a few of these in the arid, scrubby valley bottom below Teotitlán.
- INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) – Some of these buntings, in various stages of their spring colors, lined the edge of the road near Presa Piedra Azul.
- ORANGE-BREASTED BUNTING** (*Passerina leclancherii*) – Clearly one of the highlights of the trip, it's hard to find a more gaudy bunting than this! Only found in Mexico, this endemic was seen at the KM 77 wash. Yahoo! [E]
- VARIED BUNTING** (*Passerina versicolor*) – Although they were being a bit sneaky, I think most of us saw at least one or two of these at the KM 77 wash. As it turns out, the females were being bolder than the males.
- PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*) – This rare bunting was a surprise visitor to the water hole near the Presa Piedra Azul bridge! This is not a species we often get to enjoy on this tour and so it was a real treat. Not only that, but it was a male! Goodness.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

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

MAMMALS

- MEXICAN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus aureogaster*) – Our most common mammal, these were seen at the hotel as well as up in the forests.
- HISPID COTTON RAT** (*Sigmodon hispidus*) – We actually caught glimpses of these once or twice including at Monte Albán.
- COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) – One trotted through the dry agricultural land below Teotitlán on our very first morning.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 185 bird taxa and 3 mammal taxa