



Field Guides Tour Report

Puerto Rico 2017

Mar 11, 2017 to Mar 17, 2017
Tom Johnson & Doug Gochfeld

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



The breathtaking view of El Yunque National Forest from our lodge in the mountains of northeastern Puerto Rico. (Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld)

“Wow” is the first word that jumps to mind when thinking of this year’s Field Guides tour to Puerto Rico. We had a splendid time circumnavigating the island and finding all 17 of the endemic bird species (and the other endemic taxa currently considered subspecies), with smashing views of most. We had six days jam-packed with goodness, including good birds, good food, and good humor.

We started off very early on day 1 of the tour and drove from San Juan to Rio Abajo State Forest. We arrived before sunrise, and it was light enough for the dawn chorus to be starting but still dark enough that Puerto Rican Screech-Owls were still calling. Bill spotted one perched in a stand of bamboo where it was settled in to roost for the day. An early morning bonus here was Ruddy Quail-Dove. We then birded our way up the paved road until we arrived at a good vantage point from which to see one of the most endangered parrots in the world, the Puerto Rican Parrot. After a bit of a wait we connected with these loud, charismatic parrots, and there was much rejoicing. After Rio Abajo we went to Cambalache State Forest, where we were treated to excellent views of Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Oriole, and Puerto Rican Flycatcher, as well as good views for some of Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo. We then headed west for lunch in Hatillo and then to visit a pasture pond in Cumuy where a vagrant American Flamingo has spent the last few years. While here, we also had the good fortune to experience a heart-pounding chase as a Peregrine Falcon hunted collared-doves and eventually caught one. Heading farther west, we stopped briefly at Guajataca to see a few White-tailed Tropicbirds flying around offshore, and then continued on, somehow skirting a big storm system on our way down the west side of the island to La Parguera.

On our first day out of Parguera, we drove over to Laguna Cartagena for a very pleasant morning that included several of the rare West Indian Whistling-Ducks, great views of Adelaide’s Warblers, and a suite of other waterbirds that we saw only here during the trip. In the afternoon, we birded around the town of Parguera, finding an amazing concentration of the endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird, numbering more than 100 individuals! We also enjoyed excellent point-blank views of the Caribbean form of Clapper Rail in the open before we headed back to the hotel for dinner. That evening, we searched for the Puerto Rican Nightjar and ended up finding a phenomenally cooperative male nightjar that allowed us to watch it perched in the open on a bare limb until we turned off the lights and headed to bed.

We got a dark and early start on day 3, to drive up the mountain to Maricao State Forest. Despite an unexpected road closure, we still weaved our way up into this gorgeous piece of forest in plenty of time to be immersed in the wonderful dawn chorus, thanks to some quick-thinking navigation audibles by Tom. Shortly after our arrival, we were greeted by our friend (another Tom, Tom Hudson) who works for the Peregrine Fund in Puerto Rico studying the Puerto Rican endemic subspecies of Sharp-shinned Hawk (venator). After an impromptu seminar from him about Sharp-shinned Hawk conservation on the island, we enjoyed a nice breakfast while in the company of Puerto Rican Tanagers, Puerto Rican Orioles and Scaly-naped Pigeons. We then birded the trails at Maricao for the rest of the morning, finding the gorgeous Antillean Euphonia and even spotting the endemic Elf-woods Warbler twice. Just as we were about to leave the mountain reserve, we got a call from Tom H. telling us that he had found an adult Sharp-shinned Hawk perched

nearby. Two minutes later, we had converged on the spot and were looking at this gorgeous and amazingly rare raptor (there are likely fewer than 150 of these in the world) at close range in the forest subcanopy. We then drove through San Germán for lunch, eating some excellent sandwiches en route to Susúa State Forest. At Susúa, we found Pearly-eyed Thrashers and White-winged Parakeets, as well as more good views of birds we'd seen before such as Zenaída Dove and Adelaide's Warbler; however, the Key West Quail-Doves did not put in an appearance. After an early dinner, most of us went out on a nocturnal boat trip on the bay to take in the fascinating phenomenon of bioluminescence.

Our final day in the southwest of Puerto Rico began at Cabo Rojo (apparently coined as such by none other than Christopher Columbus), a thin hook of land that offers refuge to wintering shorebirds and waders. We parsed through a dizzying array of shorebirds present on the salt flats here, with highlights of Whimbrel, Snowy Plover, Western Sandpiper, and more amidst the hundreds of Stilt Sandpipers, Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Black-necked Stilts. A walk to the incredibly scenic lighthouse rewarded us with great views of many Brown Boobies (over 25), including one with a leg band. White-tailed Tropicbirds circled offshore, calling and engaging in their graceful courtship display flights. Departing Cabo Rojo, we headed to the eastern end of the island, stopping for a second round of lunch sandwiches in San Germán along the way. Before arriving in El Yunque, we made a stop to search for the rare and range-restricted Plain Pigeon in the central highlands, scoring immediately after our arrival. We made it to our beautiful eco-lodge on the edge of El Yunque in the early evening with enough light to appreciate the dusk chorus around us. After dinner and a well-timed rain shower, we went out looking for night critters and found a true bounty! What started out as a coquí frog quest turned into a night experience with several species of anoles, coquíes, and land snails, cool insects, and a non-native rat in the bamboo.

Our last full day of birding began in the lowlands of the Humacao Reserve, where we found Green-throated Caribs feeding in the forest, a Puerto Rican Flycatcher building a nest, and a troop of Puerto Rican Woodpeckers making a big noisy scene right over our heads. We then headed over to the Fajardo Inn where we eventually picked up a furtive Antillean Crested Hummingbird as well as a Green-throated Carib putting the finishing touches (spiderwebs, to be exact) on a nest. On our way out of town, we stopped at the harbor, where a couple of adult Brown Boobies put on a spectacular show as they fished in front of us for a full 30 minutes. Our afternoon birding was centered on the excellent primary forest of El Yunque, which didn't disappoint. In addition to good views of Louisiana Waterthrush, we found a couple of obliging Green Mangos for our best views of the trip. Throughout our hike here, we were surrounded by Puerto Rican Tanagers as well as the constant din of Scaly-naped Pigeon wings. As a nice way to cap off the walk, we found a Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo that performed for all, putting a big exclamation point on an already hugely successful week.

The next morning, we drove to San Juan via the El Yunque visitors center, where we viewed some exhibits about the area and spent a little more time with a highlight reel of Puerto Rican birds including Puerto Rican Oriole, Red-legged Thrush, and Pearly-eyed Thrasher.

This year's Puerto Rico tour would be a hard one to top. From the stupendously cooperative (and awesome) birds, to the pristine weather, to the food, and of course most importantly to this great group of people, it all worked out very well. The entire week was a genuine pleasure for Tom and me, and we can't wait to share another adventure with you all again in the future.

--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)

WEST INDIAN WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arborea*) – A great score at Laguna Cartagena was a group of 8 of these fine looking ducks tucked into the back of one of the cells. This is a rare and declining species throughout its range, and have become rather difficult to find, so we were very pleased with these very good scope views.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – We had one female swimming around with the Pintail and Teal flock at the Cubuy pasture ponds. These are very low density winterers in Puerto Rico.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – The most common waterfowl species in appropriate habitat. We had good numbers of these at both the Cumuy pasture pond and Laguna Cartagena.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – A low density winterer on Puerto Rico, we spotted three of these at Laguna Cartagena.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL (*Anas bahamensis*) – We had a really good number, almost 60, of these handsome dabblers at the Cumuy pasture pond on our first birding day, and a few more at our brief stop at the flooded rice fields on the way to Laguna Cartagena.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – We had a small group of these at Laguna Cartagena, which was a nice addition to the triplist. We don't typically encounter them, as they only reach Puerto Rico in very small numbers.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – We had these at the Cumuy pasture pond, Laguna Cartagena, and Humacao Reserve, the latter having the highest number (around 50).

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – We had at least 2 of these diminutive grebes close to shore at the Cumuy pasture pond.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – A couple of these were at our first water overlook at Humacao Reserve.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

AMERICAN FLAMINGO (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) – This one is a rock star within the local community which, after several years of the flamingo being in this area, treats it like a celebrity (it even has its own Google Maps label). We had good views of this amazingly pink individual at the edge of its favorite farm pond at Cumuy.

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon lepturus*) – We had some nice views of these coursing over the ocean along the northwest coast, but then had some great views during our visit to the spectacular cliffs at Cabo Rojo, including multiple instances of courtship flight, and a pair nesting out of sight on the cliffs below trading off nesting and fishing duties.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – We saw these in most places where we got near the ocean along the south and east coasts.

We saw quite a few gliding over silently at the Brown Booby spot at Fajardo, but many of our best views were at Parguera. Diane even voted this species as one of her birds of the trip due to the excellent show put on by three Frigatebirds right off the hotel deck in Parguera.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*) – WOW!! What more can be said?! We had spectacular, and prolonged, looks at two birds fishing in unison at the

Fajardo harbor on our last full day of birding. We also had a nice count of 26 perching on cliffs at Cabo Rojo, including a close one with a white field-readable band on its leg with the code "A90".

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Seen daily at La Parguera, but the most notable ones were couple of individuals seen at Laguna Cartagena, more inland than they are usually seen.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Seen on the way to Laguna Cartagena, and then at Laguna Cartagena itself.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Fairly common in appropriate habitat, and seen every day of the tour.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Surprisingly sparse. We only had a couple perched, and our largest day count was something in the vicinity of 5-8.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – A brief view for some of one dropping into the back of the rice fields near Laguna Cartagena.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – We picked up a couple of these on our last full day of birding, at Humacao.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Widespread, common, and sometimes even on cattle. [N]

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Somewhat common in appropriate wetland habitats. We saw multiples at Laguna Cartagena and Humacao, and also had one calling at night at Villa Parguera.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A few of these around Laguna Cartagena.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Scattered sparsely in a few places, including the Cumuy pasture pond, where we were surprised to see one flying by carrying nesting material. This species is a very low volume breeder in Puerto Rico, and is restricted to a small area right around where we witnessed this.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Common, especially in the southwest portion of the island, where you can't swing a binocular through the air without seeing one of these.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Seen on most days of the tour, these were especially thick at Laguna Cartagena, where there were six in the air simultaneously at one point.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Accipiter striatus venator*) – WOW! What a great experience with this extremely rare animal! Tom Hudson, working for the Peregrine Fund, gave us a great talk about the venator subspecies of Sharp-shinned Hawk endemic to Puerto Rico, and the initiatives being undertaken to study and conserve it. He then gave us a call late in the morning, as we were on our way out of Maricao, that he had one perched. We were there within two minutes, and the bird was remarkably obliging for an Accipiter, allowing us walk-away views from point-blank range. While currently considered a subspecies of Sharp-shinned Hawk, researchers are hoping to get enough physical material from these birds to get a lock on their genetics, which could open the door for a future split, giving Puerto Rico its 18th endemic bird species, and immediately making it one of the rarest species of raptors on Earth, with an estimated population of ~150. The overall experience was so neat that Sharp-shinned Hawk was voted as bird of the tour by the group. [N]

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus brunescens*) – We heard at least one of these at Rio Abajo on our first full morning of birding.

RED-TAILED HAWK (JAMAICENSIS) (*Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – Seen every day of the tour.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

CLAPPER RAIL (CARIBBEAN) (*Rallus crepitans caribaeus*) – Stupendous views of a couple of birds near the boat ramp in Parguera. Really neat to see these walking around in shady mangrove stubble in the afternoon heat, rather than trying to see them in a dense saltmarsh habitat like they inhabit on the east coast of the mainland USA.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – Vocalizing throughout our walk around Laguna Cartagena, where we heard at least a dozen individuals, and likely more.

Most people saw at least one of the couple of these that briefly showed themselves.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – At least three seen at Laguna Cartagena, including two adults. The young bird was a nice contrast in plumage to a nearby adult, the latter of which was clambering around the reeds a couple of feet off the water, as they do.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – Fairly common at all wetland habitats throughout.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana americana*) – We saw several of these red-shielded birds in amongst their Caribbean white-shielded cousins.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana columbiana*) – The artist formerly known as Caribbean Coot, this taxon has now been subsumed by the American Coot species, and is considered merely a subspecies. We saw these at multiple locations, including the Flamingo pond and Humacao.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Large numbers at the Cumuy pasture ponds.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – A few scattered about the flats at Cabo Rojo.

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*) – A nice surprise at the flats at Cabo Rojo, we got some great scope views of a couple of these adorable pale plovers running around like frenetic wind-up toys.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – We heard a couple of these pipping at Cabo Rojo, but couldn't see any of these masters of camouflage.

[*]

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – On the flats at Cabo Rojo.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – We encountered only a few of these, and only the first two days of the tour, including a couple in the rice fields on the way to Laguna Cartagena.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – We got good views of this write-in species standing on the mudflats on the outside of the road on the way out to Cabo Rojo.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – A few people had this species around our hotel in Parguera.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – It is always a real treat to see concentrations of this species, and of the roughly 300 that we saw at Cabo Rojo, quite a few were beginning to show some breeding plumage.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Plenty at Cabo Rojo, these are almost always the closest of the peeps to the viewing area there, as their shorter legs make them better suited to the high and dry mud.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – a couple hundred around the flats at Cabo Rojo, and many opportunities to compare them with their congeners, the similar Least and Western Sandpipers.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – We saw a handful of these, including a couple that were already showing appreciable amounts of breeding plumage. It's always a treat to be able to compare these directly with Semipalmated Sandpipers.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – One flushed while we were watching Bishops at Laguna Cartagena.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularia*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – We saw these in the rice fields on the way to Laguna Cartagena (where we got to compare them to Lesser Yellowlegs), and then at Cabo Rojo.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Cumuy pasture ponds, then at the rice fields on the way to Laguna Cartagena, then again at Cabo Rojo.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – The default Tern in Puerto Rico, we had these at the inn at Parguera, in several places at Cabo Rojo, and then in Fajardo at the Booby spot.

SANDWICH TERN (CABOT'S) (*Thalasseus sandvicensis acuflavidus*) – A couple of these were trying to blend in to the Royal Tern flock perched on the pilings at Cabo Rojo.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Indeed, we couldn't quite make it a day without seeing one of these. [I]

SCALY-NAPED PIGEON (*Patagioenas squamosa*) – Widespread on Puerto Rico, where it is much easier to see than many other islands it inhabits.

We were inundated with their calls starting at Rio Abajo, and we were still hearing them at Casa Cubuy at the end of the tour. El Yunque seems to have one of the highest densities of this species anywhere, and the repeated opportunities for viewing this handsome forest pigeon are great.

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – Seen by some on the drive along the west side of the island, and then again briefly in the Lajas Valley.

PLAIN PIGEON (*Patagioenas inornata wetmorei*) – We had an excellent experience with one of these near Comerío, when one flew over almost immediately after we arrived, and we were able to track it to a tree where it stood still for fifteen minutes or more, and allowed us to get into position for full frame, unobstructed, scope views. This has become rather difficult to find throughout its range in the West Indies, so we were especially happy with the way this one showed.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – These are newer arrivals than the next species, and we likely saw birds that were hybrids between these two difficult-to-differentiate species.

AFRICAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) – Present throughout, we certainly got our fill of this long-established introduced species.

[I]

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina portoricensis*) – Seen every day, and even perching long enough for scope views several times.

[N]

RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon montana*) – We lucked out with one walking around the road in Rio Abajo pre-sunrise on our first morning of birding, allowing everyone to get looks before it sauntered away up the road. We heard a few more there, and then we had a brief look at one at Bosque Estatal de Susúa just before closing time.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant and widespread. [N]

ZENAIDA DOVE (*Zenaida aurita*) – This warm-toned zenaida with striking white in the trailing edge of the secondaries was encountered throughout the tour, and gave especially good looks around El Yunque.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – First encountered at the Cumuy pasture pond, we had a few more subsequent run-ins in with them their open-country habitats.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Seen in the southwestern part of the island on a couple of days.

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – Heard only at Bosque Estatal de Cambalache and then again the next day at Laguna Cartagena. [*]

PUERTO RICAN LIZARD-CUCKOO (*Coccyzus vieilloti*) – Some got good in-the-van looks at Cambalache, where we also heard it well, but then we all got views of a fairly vocal one during our afternoon walk at El Yunque. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

PUERTO RICAN SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops nudipes*) – We had these calling shortly after our arrival at Rio Abajo, and then sharp-eyed Bill spotted one through the bamboo, and we got to watch it on this roost at our leisure. [E]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

PUERTO RICAN NIGHTJAR (*Antrostomus noctitherus*) – WOW! We had simply phenomenal views of this nocturnal endemic, as we found one just perching up on a dead snag, and it stayed put for all of us to enjoy great views of it before we walked away, leaving it remaining on its perch. This was several people's bird of the trip, and came in a very close second place overall. [E]

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

ANTILLEAN MANGO (*Anthracothorax dominicus aurulentus*) – A couple around the Parguera area, especially on the grounds of the Villa Parguera.

GREEN MANGO (*Anthracothorax viridis*) – We initially got some views of these up at Maricao, but they weren't as cooperative as we would have liked. However, on our final afternoon/evening walk, at El Yunque, we found a couple that gave us extended splendid looks as they fed on insects, preened, stretched, and did whatever Hummingbirds do when they stick their tongues out. Great repeated scope views of these for all! [E]

GREEN-THROATED CARIB (*Eulampis holosericeus*) – Good views at Humacao, and then later that same day at the Fajardo Inn, where we even found one in the finishing stages of building a nest, as it organized the final few spider webs around the outside of the already constructed cup. [N]

PUERTO RICAN EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon maugaeus*) – This was our most widespread Hummingbird on the tour, though it wasn't common anywhere. We ran into this diminutive endemic at Rio Abajo, Parguera, Cabo Rojo, and El Yunque. [E]

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (LESSER ANTILLES) (*Orthorhynchus cristatus exilis*) – We ran into this special little guy at the Fajardo Inn, much to everyone's delight. We even got to see an adult male and that funky crest of his, as he chased a Green-throated Carib back and forth through the flowering trees that he clearly wanted all to himself.

Todidae (Todies)

PUERTO RICAN TODY (*Todus mexicanus*) – If you had to pick one bird in Puerto Rico to fit the bill of "adorable", this would be it. These emerald, hummingbird-sized, Kingfisher/Jacamar wannabes are one of the most sought after of the Puerto Rican endemics. They are one of five Todys in the world, a family that is restricted to just the Greater Antilles. [E]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – We had one give us a very timely fly by while we were doing our checklist on the balcony at the Villa Parguera one evening.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

PUERTO RICAN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes portoricensis*) – Encountered throughout the tour, with some enjoyable point-blank looks at the Fajardo Inn, and of at least 4 individuals making a ruckus at Humacao. We also were able to watch various stages of nest excavation throughout the tour. [EN]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (EASTERN CARIBBEAN) (*Falco sparverius caribaeorum*) – Widespread, with a couple of very memorable encounters: The first of these was one dismantling a lizard at Laguna Cartagena, and the second was the tender loving care that the pair at the hotel at Parguera were showing each other on the wires just outside the parking lot. [N]

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – We had a close flyby at the supermarket in Parguera while we were looking at Blackbirds, and then another good view of one being chased by Green-throated Caribs at the Fajardo Inn. This latter one even perched for scope views for a minute or more. We had one fly by up high at El Yunque as well.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – We had an exciting experience with an adult as it hunted Collared-Doves around the pasture ponds at Cubuy on day one. After several pursuits of various doves, it eventually grabbed one out of the air and administered the coup de grâce on the wing right in front of our eyes.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

MONK PARAKEET (*Myiopsitta monachus*) – We had some near Cumuy on the way to see the Flamingo on our first full day of birding. [IN]

WHITE-WINGED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris versicolurus*) – A couple flew by the Lajas rice fields, but then we got much more satisfactory views at Susúa forest a couple of days later.

PUERTO RICAN PARROT (*Amazona vittata*) – Once widespread on Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican Parrots became very rare and range-restricted due to habitat loss and direct persecution (they were considered crop pests). Then, they were almost wiped out from their last known stronghold of El Yunque by a Hurricane, but a captive breeding program brought them back from the edge of extinction (13 total birds), and now there are over 200 in the world. While many of them are still in the captive breeding program, they are now living and breeding in the wild at Rio Abajo, where they have been released. We had a nice experience with good scope views of a couple of birds during our first morning's birding. [E]

ORANGE-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Eupsittula canicularis*) – A nice surprise on our last morning. While we were waiting for the El Yunque visitors center to open, we found a couple of these investigating a termite mound in the crotch of a tree as a potential nest site, and we got to study these two at length. [IN]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

CARIBBEAN ELAENIA (*Elaenia martinica*) – We saw and heard a couple of these quite well at Cabo Rojo, right along the road where we were viewing shorebirds from.

LESSER ANTILLEAN PEWEE (PUERTO RICO) (*Contopus latirostris blancoi*) – This taxon used to be considered its own species, Puerto Rican Pewee (formerly giving Puerto Rican 18 endemic species), but has since been lumped and is now known by this name. We got nice views of these at Rio Abajo on day one, and then again a couple of days later.

PUERTO RICAN FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus antillarum*) – We saw this on our first day, at Cambalache State Forest, and then had one close and building a nest at Humacao on our last full birding day. [EN]

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Abundant. Seen and heard every day. Even saw two mating episodes.

LOGGERHEAD KINGBIRD (PUERTO RICAN) (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus taylori*) – We saw these on 5 of our 6 birding days, but despite this consistency, they were MUCH more seldom encountered than Grays. They like more forested areas, and we got our best views at Maricao and then outside the lodge at Casa Cubuy.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

PUERTO RICAN VIREO (*Vireo latimeri*) – We saw this endemic that resembles an Eastern Bell's Vireo at Rio Abajo and then again at Maricao. [E]

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO (*Vireo altiloquus*) – Quite widespread, we saw and heard them in just about all forested areas. Especially abundant at Rio Abajo.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

CARIBBEAN MARTIN (*Progne dominicensis*) – Had good looks at Villa Parguera, and then continued to see them in ones and twos. The most memorable encounter was a pair showing really nicely at the cliffs at Cabo Rojo, including a male perching on the jagged seaside rocks below eye

level.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Laguna Cartagena and then in transit to Fajardo.

CAVE SWALLOW (CARIBBEAN) (*Petrochelidon fulva puertoricensis*) – These can be commonly seen near major road overpasses and bridges, where they nest. We stopped under one such overpass on the way to Cambalache and got to see their really cool nests which actually have different shapes than the Cave Swallows in Mexico and Texas. [N]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RED-LEGGED THRUSH (ARDOSIACEUS/ALBIVENTRIS) (*Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus*) – Common thrush throughout good forests, and we got nice views in a few places, including hopping around the parking area at Maricao. [N]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

PEARLY-EYED THRASHER (*Margarops fuscatus*) – Widespread but shy. We encountered these at Maricao, Susúa, and the El Yunque visitors center parking lot.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Every day, in most habitats that aren't pure forest.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Good views of one of these on the edge of the healthy stream near the gate on the road into El Yunque.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – In the mangroves on our walk through Parguera, and then again at Humacao.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Nice views of a male at Maricao near where we had the somewhat lookalike Elfin-woods Warbler.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Lajas rice fields.

ELFIN-WOODS WARBLER (*Setophaga angelae*) – Discovered by humanity in only 1971, Elfin-woods Warbler is one of the most range-restricted of the native Puerto Rican birds, and Maricao is the only area where it can readily be seen. On our morning there, we saw at least three of these sharp-looking black-and-white warblers, including a pair cooperatively working a patch of bamboo alongside the road. [E]

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – One of the species that has been found to segregate habitats by sex and age-class on the wintering grounds, we saw the striking males in the tall inland forests at Rio Abajo and Maricao, and we saw a female or two in the mangroves of Humacao.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Probably the most common of "our" migrant wood warblers, we encountered Parulas on at least four days, across several habitat types.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – We had some of these singers at Parguera and Cabo Rojo.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – A nice male in the forest at El Yunque. These, like American Redstarts, often segregate habitats by sexes on the wintering grounds.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – After a difficult bird at Cabo Rojo, we caught up with a couple much more cooperative individuals the next day at Humacao.

ADELAIDE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga adelaidae*) – The other Puerto Rican endemic wood-warbler. We heard them well at Rio Abajo, and saw a couple well at Laguna Cartagena, and then some saw it at Susúa as well. [E]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola portoricensis*) – All day every day (when not driving). We saw these energetic little birds in a wide variety of habitats, and in several different stages of nesting and nest building throughout the week. [N]

YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris olivaceus bryanti*) – We heard a couple of these at the Lajas rice fields, and then got some great looks at the extremely productive field next to the Shell station in Cidra.

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris bicolor omissus*) – Very widespread and fairly common, we saw these on most days, and at most places, often quite well. [N]

PUERTO RICAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla portoricensis*) – This beautiful Bullfinch, which is actually a tanager, was seen on several days in its appropriate forest habitat, including at Rio Abajo, Maricao, and El Yunque. [E]

PUERTO RICAN TANAGER (*Nesospingus speculiferus*) – On its way to being in its own monotypic family (it is already considered as such by some authorities), this is one of the real distinctive endemics of Puerto Rico. We got some excellent views at Maricao, and then ran into a veritable swarm of them at El Yunque. [E]

PUERTO RICAN SPINDALIS (*Spindalis portoricensis*) – This is another species that might end up being in a different family (though not a monotypic one) at some point in the near future. We encountered them at least by call every day, and saw them well at Parguera and then in the northeastern part of the island. This included a fantastically cooperative subadult male (mostly an adult male in plumage, but with some thin black streaks on the flanks and upper breast) in the parking lot at the Villa Parguera. [E]

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – We heard one of these singing at the Cumuy Pasture Ponds, but it stayed hidden in the field across the road. [*]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

YELLOW-SHOULDERED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius xanthomus*) – Another of the endangered endemics, they are threatened by coastal habitat loss and nest parasitism of Shiny Cowbirds, and are also restricted to a small swathe in the southwestern corner of the island. We had the great fortune to see over a hundred individuals between two locations in Parguera on our first afternoon looking for them. While we did encounter them in passing a few more times over the next couple of days (including going to and from roost sites around the hotel), this afternoon excursion really took the cake. [E]

GREATER ANTILLEAN GRACKLE (*Quiscalus niger brachypterus*) – As widespread as any other species on the island.

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Interestingly, these colonizers were especially noticeable around Puerto Rican Orioles and Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds, two icterids with fairly convergent appearances (mostly black birds with yellow shoulders).

PUERTO RICAN ORIOLE (*Icterus portoricensis*) – This endemic was seen on most days, and seemingly easier to see than in past years. Repeated good views throughout the week, notably at Cambalache, Maricao, Casa Cubuy, and the El Yunque visitor's center. [EN]

VENEZUELAN TROUPIAL (*Icterus icterus*) – This stunning, though introduced, species is a real show-stopper, and luckily for us we had a few encounters with these around the southwest portion of the island, which is the species' stronghold in Puerto Rico. [I]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

ANTILLEAN EUPHONIA (*Euphonia musica sclateri*) – Multiples of this gorgeous species were seen at Maricao, and then we heard it at El Yunque.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Another in the suite of introduced birds to Puerto Rico, we didn't miss these on a single day, thank goodness. [I]

Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

NORTHERN RED BISHOP (*Euplectes franciscanus*) – Some were out in the marsh at Laguna Cartagena. These short-tailed Bobolink lookalikes are introduced, and at this season their drab color palette does truly make them look like Bobolinks. [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

ORANGE-CHEEKED WAXBILL (*Estrilda melpoda*) – Laura found some of these handsome looking introduced Estrildids for us while we were at a fuel and provisioning stop in Cidra. [I]

BRONZE MANNIKIN (*Spermestes cucullata*) – We had Bronze Mannikins on three days, with the best views being at the Shell station in Cidra, on our way from Comerío to Casa Cubuy. Also seen in the Lajas Valley and at the Fajardo Inn. [I]

MAMMALS

SMALL INDIAN MONGOOSE (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) – Seen by a couple as it zipped across the path at Laguna Cartagena. [I]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 124 bird taxa and 1 mammal taxa