

Trip Report — Puerto Rico I (Private tour with Bonnie Duman) 2025

February 1-7, 2025 with Cory Gregory



The Scaly-naped Pigeons, a regional specialty, were fairly common and quite stunning to boot! Photo by participant Ted Wolff.

The Caribbean is an ideal getaway during the colder winter months for many of us and this trip to one of the Greater Antilles was just that. The beautiful and warm climate of this tropical island, alongside with the many special and endemic birds makes this a fun and easy place to visit! Our short trip focused on these island endemics and regional specialties and I'm happy to report

that we ended up doing very well! But add to that, a fun group of birders, and what you end up with is a special trip to a special place.

Our adventure got underway in San Juan where, on our first morning, we made an early getaway in order to be primed and ready for the deluge of new birds awaiting us in the Rio Abajo area. With Puerto Rican Owls serenading us when we arrived, we were witness to the forest waking up all around us; Bananaquits singing, Puerto Rican Flycatchers calling, distant Key West Quail-Doves singing, and Puerto Rican Bullfinches sounding off. After our picnic breakfast, we continued to bird the area and quickly picked up a myriad of new endemics such as Puerto Rican Tody, Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Vireo, Puerto Rican Oriole, and Adelaide's Warbler. We also heard some Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoos about the time that we successfully caught up with the rarest of all the endemics, the Puerto Rican Amazon! What a way to start our trip! Later that day we stopped along the coast to enjoy many White-tailed Tropicbirds wheeling offshore, and a beachside town where Magnificent Frigatebirds, Royal and Sandwich terns, and Brown Pelicans ruled the coastline. Between the special forest birds and the charismatic seabirds, it was a great first day.



Perhaps the rarest bird of our trip for Puerto Rico was this continuing and very vivid Scarlet Ibis!
Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

One of the many perks of this trip was the splendid scenery. Yes, our home for the next three nights, in the quiet coastal town of La Parguera, was a beautiful spot right on the water. After we pulled ourselves away from the sunsets visible from our rooms, we saw some interesting things right in town like a flock of 50 Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds and, at night, some Puerto Rican Nightjars up a nearby road! Other times, in the mangroves, we enjoyed the company of a bold Clapper Rail, heard the chipping of Northern Waterthrushes, photographed a territorial Puerto Rican Mango, and saw the ubiquitous "Golden" Yellow Warblers. Up in the mountains near there, we spent time with some of the more uncommon endemic species. Up in the Bosque Estatal de Maricao region, we added the curious Elfin-woods Warbler, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Puerto Rican Tanager, Green Mango, and an incredible encounter with a pair of Puerto Rican Euphonias. Overhead, Caribbean Martins swooped and Gray and Loggerhead kingbirds ruled the perches.



Focusing on this secretive Least Bittern was no small challenge. Participant Ted Wolff somehow managed to do just that!

Another couple of habitats we visited included freshwater marshes like the one at Laguna Cartagena. The wet areas there were alive with herons, including the diminutive Least Bittern, egrets, and some ducks including Ring-necked Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and even some West Indian Whistling-Ducks! The grassy areas hosted Smooth-billed Anis by the dozen, Black-faced Grassquits, and even a couple of Yellow-faced Grassquits. Near Cabo Rojo we visited another freshwater pond, this one was absolutely loaded with waterbirds such as White-cheeked Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Blue-winged Teal, and even some Northern Shovelers. Black-necked Stilts, Stilt Sandpipers, and yellowlegs dotted the shore, and even some Least Grebes swam around in stealth mode. This particular pond also had some oddities

nearby like Indian Silverbills. One could easily spend all day just birding the one pond!



Smooth-billed Anis were fairly common in grassy areas. Guide Cory Gregory took this photo near Laguna Cartagena.

There was another habitat nearby that was home to a variety of different things we hadn't seen yet, the saltwater flats around Cabo Rojo. Our early start allowed us to get there in time before it started baking in the heat. This meant we had great opportunities to see and photograph Puerto Rican Mangos, some fantastically-close encounters with Caribbean Elaenia and Puerto Rican Flycatcher, and a great selection of shorebirds including Wilson's Plover, Whimbrel, yellowlegs, Willets, Ruddy Turnstone, and Stilt Sandpipers. Rounding out the list was Venezuelan Troupial, Shiny Cowbird, and many "Golden" Yellow Warblers. A nice touch was having lunch right on the water, enjoying the seabreeze while Royal Terns and Brown Pelicans soared by.



Once we found a Clapper Rail, there was no shortage of great photo ops! Participant Ted Wolff got this great shot of it.

Although Puerto Rico is a relatively small island, compared to some others in the Greater Antilles, there was more to explore and so we moved towards the east side of the island and stayed up in the mountains at an ecolodge. Talk about birding right at the lodge... the birding was great immediately out our doors. Within reach from this remote lodge included the Reserva Natural Medio Mundo y Daguao where we spent a morning walking through the mangroves. Although the highlights were many at this spot, no doubt the star of the show was a vivid Scarlet Ibis that we found just in the nick of time! Wow! There were plenty of other things to keep us busy like Mangrove Cuckoos (including 4 in one tree!), a quick Green-throated Carib, many shorebirds and herons, some point-blank Adelaide's Warblers, and

even Black-faced Grassquits and some introduced Orange-cheeked Waxbills.



In the end, one of the highlights was the fun group. Here we are high up in the mountains on the west side of the island.

As we closed out our trip, there were just a couple more things we wanted to try for. One of them was Puerto Rican Owl, a species we had heard several times but wanted to see. Thankfully, with some hard work, we DID get visuals on this endemic and special owl. What's more, it was immediately outside the lodge door! Success! Another rare bird that we wanted to try for was the Plain Pigeon, a species found only on four islands in the world. It came down to our final morning when we visited a spot that has historically been good for this tough-to-find species. Through our persistence and a little luck, we DID find this target bird and ended up getting good photos too! What a great send-off for us as we headed back to San Juan and to the airport.

And so even though our trip was a quick one, I want to thank each of you for helping make this trip a success. I really valued getting to know each of you and look forward to keeping in touch.

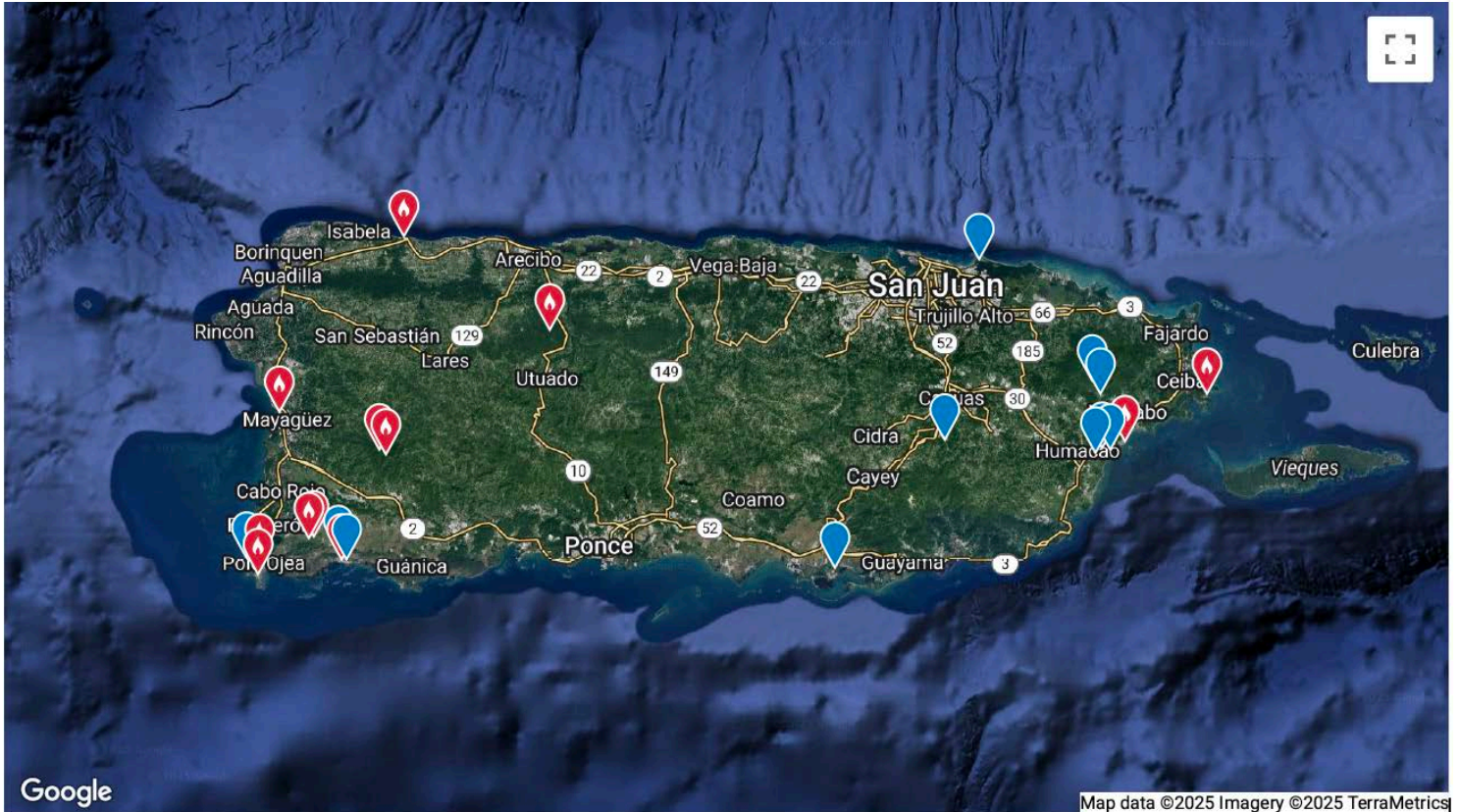
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/332635>

-- Cory Gregory (Curlew)

Field Guides Birding Tours -- PUERTO RICO, 2025 (Private tour with Bonnie Duman & Cory Gregory)



2 – 7 Feb 2025 (6 days) Link-only



📍 Puerto Rico

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👤 Cory Gregory



For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip...

106

Species Observed

27

Checklists














































28






























Species with Photos






























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Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

4	West Indian Whistling-Duck <i>Dendrocygna arborea</i>	  1
205	Blue-winged Teal <i>Spatula discors</i>	  2
3	Northern Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>	  1
113	White-cheeked Pintail <i>Anas bahamensis</i>	  2
30	Ring-necked Duck <i>Aythya collaris</i>	  1
14	Lesser Scaup <i>Aythya affinis</i>	  1
78	Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> *	  6
31	Scaly-naped Pigeon <i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>	  7
7	White-crowned Pigeon <i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	  4
3	Plain Pigeon <i>Patagioenas inornata</i>	  4  1
28	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	  5
3	African Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i> * 	  1  2
7	Common Ground Dove <i>Columbina passerina</i>	  3
2	Key West Quail-Dove <i>Geotrygon chrysis</i>	  1
32	White-winged Dove <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	  7
17	Zenaida Dove <i>Zenaida aurita</i>	  6
2	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	  1
31	Smooth-billed Ani <i>Crotophaga ani</i>	  1  4
9	Mangrove Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus minor</i>	  3  3
4	Puerto Rican Lizard-Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus vieilloti</i>	  2

16	Puerto Rican Nightjar	<i>Antrostomus noctitherus</i>	▶  1  2
4	Puerto Rican Mango	<i>Anthracothorax aurulentus</i> 	▶  4  1
1	Green Mango	<i>Anthracothorax viridis</i> 	▶  1  1
3	Green-throated Carib	<i>Eulampis holosericeus</i>	▶  2
5	Puerto Rican Emerald	<i>Riccordia maugaeus</i>	▶  2
1	Antillean Crested Hummingbird	<i>Orthorhyncus cristatus</i>	▶  1
6	Clapper Rail	<i>Rallus crepitans</i>	▶  2
1	Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	▶  1
11	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  2
2	Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>	▶  1
46	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  2
15	Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	▶  3
1	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  1
9	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	▶  1
13	Wilson's Plover	<i>Anarhynchus wilsonia</i>	▶  1
2	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	▶  1
4	Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	▶  1
5	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  3
48	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	▶  6  3
9	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	▶  2
4	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	▶  2
6	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶  3
160	Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	▶  3

9	Least Sandpiper <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  1
13	Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	▶  2
46	Royal Tern <i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶  6
5	Least Grebe <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	▶  1
9	White-tailed Tropicbird <i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	▶  1  1
30	Magnificent Frigatebird <i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶  4
1	Scarlet Ibis <i>Eudocimus ruber</i>	▶  1  1
4	Least Bittern <i>Botaurus exilis</i>	▶  2  1
5	Yellow-crowned Night Heron <i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶  4
10	Little Blue Heron <i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶  4
3	Tricolored Heron <i>Egretta tricolor</i>	▶  2
2	Snowy Egret <i>Egretta thula</i>	▶  2
3	Green Heron <i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶  1  3
11	Western Cattle-Egret <i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  5
17	Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  7
1	Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  1
49	Brown Pelican <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  7
57	Turkey Vulture <i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  7
3	Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  3
2	Broad-winged Hawk <i>Buteo platypterus</i>	▶  1  1
12	Red-tailed Hawk <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶  1  7
6	Puerto Rican Owl <i>Gymnasio nudipes</i>	▶  2
7	Puerto Rican Tody <i>Todus mexicanus</i>	▶  2  3

3	Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶  3
9	Puerto Rican Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes portoricensis</i>	▶  2  3
4	American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  3
18	Monk Parakeet <i>Myiopsitta monachus</i> *	▶  6
5	Caribbean Elaenia <i>Elaenia martinica</i>	▶  2  2
1	Lesser Antillean Pewee <i>Contopus latirostris</i>	▶  1
5	Puerto Rican Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus antillarum</i>	▶  2  2
41	Gray Kingbird <i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	▶  16
8	Loggerhead Kingbird <i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	▶  1  4
5	Puerto Rican Vireo <i>Vireo latimeri</i>	▶  2
5	Black-whiskered Vireo <i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	▶  2
9	Caribbean Martin <i>Progne dominicensis</i> 📍	▶  2  1
21	Cave Swallow <i>Petrochelidon fulva</i>	▶  2
3	Pearly-eyed Thrasher <i>Margarops fuscatus</i>	▶  1  2
4	Northern Mockingbird <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  3
8	Red-legged Thrush <i>Turdus plumbeus</i>	▶  5
25	Bronze Mannikin <i>Spermestes cucullata</i> * 📍	▶  1  1
4	Indian Silverbill <i>Euodice malabarica</i> * ✓	▶  1
10	Scaly-breasted Munia <i>Lonchura punctulata</i> *	▶  1
3	Orange-cheeked Waxbill <i>Estrilda melpoda</i> *	▶  2
14	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  5
2	Puerto Rican Euphonia <i>Chlorophonia sclateri</i>	▶  1
6	Puerto Rican Tanager <i>Nesospingus speculiferus</i> 📍	▶  1  2

5	Puerto Rican Spindalis <i>Spindalis portoricensis</i> 🇵🇷	▶ 📷 1 📄 3
3	Puerto Rican Oriole <i>Icterus portoricensis</i>	▶ 📄 2
10	Venezuelan Troupial <i>Icterus icterus</i> *	▶ 📄 3
59	Yellow-shouldered Blackbird <i>Agelaius xanthomus</i>	▶ 📷 4 📄 4
10	Shiny Cowbird <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	▶ 📷 1 📄 1
109	Greater Antillean Grackle <i>Quiscalus niger</i>	▶ 📄 10
1	Louisiana Waterthrush <i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	▶ 📄 1
3	Northern Waterthrush <i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	▶ 📄 2
4	Elfin-woods Warbler <i>Setophaga angelae</i>	▶ 📄 1
3	American Redstart <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	▶ 📄 3
1	Northern Parula <i>Setophaga americana</i>	▶ 📄 1
7	Yellow Warbler <i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶ 📄 2
7	Adelaide's Warbler <i>Setophaga adelaidae</i> 🇵🇷	▶ 📷 5 📄 2
65	Bananaquit <i>Coereba flaveola</i>	▶ 📷 1 📄 14
2	Yellow-faced Grassquit <i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>	▶ 📄 1
7	Puerto Rican Bullfinch <i>Melopyrrha portoricensis</i>	▶ 📄 3
8	Black-faced Grassquit <i>Melanospiza bicolor</i>	▶ 📄 4
EXOTIC: ESCAPEE		
3	Muscovy Duck <i>Cairina moschata</i> *	▶ 📄 2
ADDITIONAL TAXA		
2	hummingbird sp. <i>Trochilidae</i> sp.	▶ 📄 1