



Field Guides Tour Report

Trinidad & Tobago Dec. 2012

Dec 27, 2012 to Jan 5, 2013

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For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.

There's nothing like a visit to the islands of Trinidad & Tobago, with their balmy temperatures, lush landscapes and vividly colorful birds, to chase away the winter blues. And this year's escape was particularly welcome, considering that most of North America was shivering in the grips of an epic blizzard during our tour!

The islands have long been known as an excellent "entree" into South American birding. Their avifauna includes representatives of most of the families found on the mainland -- jacamars, motmots, trogons, woodcreepers, antbirds, manakins, bellbirds, parrots, toucans, tityras, hummingbirds and more -- in manageable numbers for those just coming to grips with a new continent's offerings. But even those who've traveled widely in South America find plenty to enjoy here.

Among the treats were Asa Wright's famous Oilbirds, which rocked gently on their ledges while we peered in from the cave entrance. Red-billed Tropicbirds floated past our hillside viewing point or snoozed on nests among the leaf litter. A tiny male Tufted Coquette pirouetted on his perch, his feathery adornments flared to full advantage. A peachy-fronted Mangrove Cuckoo chuckled in a nearby tree. A boisterous White-bellied Antbird bellowed challenges practically at our toes. Green-backed Trogons shared our picnic spot, while Trinidad Motmots shared our picnic. An American Pygmy-Kingfisher sat amidst the mangrove roots. An aptly-named Large-billed Tern stood among its Royal cousins. And who will soon forget the wonderful spectacle of the Scarlet Ibis roost, with the gloriously colored birds arranged like so many Christmas ornaments on a giant tree -- and more arriving by the minute?

Part of the pleasure of this tour is having the chance to get to know the birds of the islands well -- we see most of them again and again, and we had particularly fine views of many on this tour: honeycreepers in colors that almost defy description (Purple and Green seem like such understatements), jousting White-necked Jacobins, stunningly beautiful Trinidad Motmots, swinging their pendulum tails, jewel bright Rufous-tailed Jacamars, and of course, the country's "Sugar Bird" -- the ubiquitous Bananaquit.

Of course, sharing the birds with such a companionable group of fellow adventurers is more than half the fun. Thanks to all of you for making this trip such a pleasure to lead. I hope to see you all in the field again some day! -- Megan



Somehow, "green" seems like such an understatement when you're talking about Green Honeycreepers! Photo by guide Megan Crewe.

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

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

LITTLE TINAMOU (*Crypturellus soui*) – As usual, we heard several of these -- and didn't catch even the faintest glimpse of one. [*]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – Two females stood on the concrete dividing two of the wastewater ponds at Tobago Plantations.

MASKED DUCK (*Nomonyx dominicus*) – Two females floated among the lily pads in one of the wastewater ponds at Tobago Plantations, keeping a watchful eye on the group.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

RUFIOUS-VENTED CHACHALACA (*Ortalis ruficauda*) – Common throughout Tobago, including our first, nibbling flower blossoms in the trees around the Grafton Estate parking lot, and several raucous groups on the grounds of the Blue Waters Inn. This is Tobago's national bird.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*)

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus*)

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Common along the coasts of both islands, with especially nice looks at many, lurking menacingly, over Little Tobago. We saw a few chase (and mug) Red-billed Tropicbirds returning to their chicks with fish in their bellies -- hence their name.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*)

RED-FOOTED BOOBY (*Sula sula*) – Good numbers of both color morphs -- all white with black wings, and brown with a white tail -- sailing past Little Tobago or preening on nests there.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – A scattering around Waterloo, with others drying their wings in the trees around some of the ponds at Tobago Plantations.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) – Common at Tobago Plantations, including one with a fish firmly impaled on both mandibles (which it was doing its best to dislodge) with another in hot pursuit. A lot of the chase was going on underwater, so we weren't quite sure how the drama eventually played out!

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – A scattering around Waterloo, but our best views came at Blue Waters Inn, where a handful hung out in the bay, periodically plunging headfirst into the water after fish.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – The most widespread of the tour's herons, with a few in the Melon Patch, many in the mangroves at Caroni Swamp and one or two on the grounds of the Blue Waters Inn.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Common across both islands, including several standing tall on the backs of cows, goats and sheep.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – A youngster lurked among the little mangroves in Orange Valley and an adult stalked the little stream at the entrance of Blue Waters Inn.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

SCARLET IBIS (*Eudocimus ruber*) – Wow! There's nothing quite like watching the spectacular fireworks of this gorgeous species returning to its roost among the mangroves -- in technicolor strings of dayglow red. By the time we left, the mangroves were looking like well-decorated Christmas trees. This is Trinidad's national bird.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Almost ridiculously common on Trinidad, with kettles of hundreds circling over the lowlands.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

PEARL KITE (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) – One of these tiny kites sat in a tree near the entrance to the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, carefully studying the ground below it -- and causing great consternation among the local Tropical Kingbirds!

LONG-WINGED HARRIER (*Circus buffoni*) – It made us work for it -- first popping up in fits and starts WAAAAAAAY across the rice fields near Caroni Swamp -- but it finally cooperated, soaring back and forth over a nearby pond while we watched from a highway overpass.

WHITE HAWK (*Leucopternis albigollis*) – One soared over just after we'd all piled back into the vans on the Blanchisseuse road. Following a quick decanting, we all enjoyed long views of it as it soared back and forth on broad wings above us, its white head gleaming against the blue morning sky. We saw another pair perched in a tree far across the valley from our viewing point in a generously shared back garden along the Las Lapas trail.

COMMON BLACK-HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*)

GREAT BLACK-HAWK (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) – After hearing a nest bound youngster repeatedly calling (a high-pitched whistle) from its nest along the Gilpin Trail, we caught a quick glimpse of an adult as it soared across an open valley on our drive back to the hotel at the end of our day in the rainforest.

SAVANNA HAWK (*Buteogallus meridionalis*)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – One circled over the main building at Asa Wright, seen as we climbed back up the hill after our morning on the Discovery trail, and we saw others soaring over Blue Waters Inn and Little Tobago.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo nitidus*) – Scope views of a pair of adults sitting in a dead tree on the far side of the christophene field; one was facing us and the other was facing away, conveniently giving us the chance to study both sides at once!

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo brachyurus*)

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – The sudden appearance of one right over our heads as we walked through the pastures at the Aripo

Agricultural Research Station was a nice surprise. We also saw a youngster circling high over the buildings at Asa Wright while we walked back up the Discovery trail.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway cheriway*) – One sat atop the crumbling walls of a derelict building in the big coconut grove we drove through on the eastern side of Trinidad.

YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*)

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*)

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – A big female rested in the meagre shade of a nearly dead tree in a pasture at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station. This is a winter visitor to the islands.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL (*Aramides cajanea*) – Some of the group heard the far-off calls of this species along an overgrown back road near Waller Field. [*]

SORA (*Porzana carolina*)

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinica*) – Best seen at Tobago Plantations, where good numbers picked their way across the lily pads or lurked among the reeds. Particularly entertaining was the one with its white undertail feathers flared -- looking for all the world like another water lily. [N]

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A handful strode around the mudflats of Waterloo on long pink legs.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

WATTLED JACANA (*Jacana jacana*) – Particularly common around the buffalypso pastures at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, including a few strolling around the barn itself -- which allowed us to see well those incredibly long "lily trotting" toes.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – A trio of not so solitary birds rummaged along the edge of a muddy little waterway in a pasture at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*) – Several small gangs of these plain shorebirds gathered on the mudflats at Waterloo.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – A handful preened on a mudflat out in Waterloo Bay; their distinctive down-curved beaks were hard to see without the scope!

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Common around Waterloo, but our best views came at Blue Waters Inn, where a little mob of "regulars" bathed in the foot baths and checked the floor of the bar for potential tidbits. To say they're acclimated to people is a serious understatement!

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – A couple of winter-dulled birds crouched in buffalypso footprints in mud beside the road through the Aripo Agricultural Research Station.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (GRAELLSII) (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) – An adult snoozed on a rock in Waterloo Bay, and a youngster did the same among a big group of Laughing Gulls there.

LARGE-BILLED TERN (*Phaetusa simplex*) – One flew past as we were getting back into the vans at our first stop in Waterloo. Fortunately, it landed among the gulls and terns in a big roost, allowing us good opportunity to study it in the scopes.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

BLACK SKIMMER (CINERASCENS) (*Rynchops niger cinerascens*) – A few around Waterloo, including several small groups skimming their way back and forth near the water's edge.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Our best views came on pre-breakfast walks at the Blue Waters Inn, where we scoped several perched in a nearby treetop.

SCALED PIGEON (*Patagioenas speciosa*) – A quartet perched up in the "toucan tree" down the hill from the Asa Wright veranda one morning.

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*) – Very common in the yards around Bon Accord.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*)

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – Several rummaged under the orange trees on the grounds of Blue Waters Inn.

GRAY-FRONTED DOVE (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) – One of these big doves trundled around on and under the feeders at Asa Wright on several mornings, looking for bread crumbs.

Psittacidae (Parrots)

GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET (*Forpus passerinus*) – A pair enlarging a hole in a wooden fence post at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station were a treat -- nice spotting, Barbara! We saw others in noisy flight. [N]

LILAC-TAILED PARROTLET (*Touit batavicus*) – A couple rocketed past on the Blanchisseuse road, calling as they went.

BLUE-HEADED PARROT (*Pionus menstruus*) – A noisy little flock dropped into Morne La Croix late in the afternoon. Fortunately, they came to rest right at the top of a conveniently bare tree.

ORANGE-WINGED PARROT (*Amazona amazonica*) – Daily, including the noisy pairs flying up and down the Arima Valley every morning with those distinctive orange wing patches flashing.

YELLOW-CROWNED PARROT (*Amazona ochrocephala*) – A trio of these big Amazons perched high in some royal palm trees in Nariva Swamp, showing their bright yellow crowns -- and distinctively green faces. The status of this species in Trinidad is a bit uncertain. They may have made it to the island from Venezuela on their own; however, they're also very popular caged birds on the island, and may be descendents of escapees.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (*Piaya cayana*) – Two bounced around in a stand of tree tobacco down the hill from the veranda at Asa Wright, looking for all the world like their (long-tailed) squirrel namesakes.

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – One calling from a tree over our heads at Tobago Plantations, his peachy throat pulsing, was a nice antidote to the midday heat.

STRIPED CUCKOO (*Tapera naevia*) – One sat on a distant fence post at the Aripo Livestock Station, whistling its distinctive song -- nice spotting, Barbara!

GREATER ANI (*Crotophaga major*) – A little gang of them flicked through the mangroves near the start of our Caroni Swamp boat trip. Though it was challenging trying to spot them through the thick growth, I think we all got there in the end!

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*)

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – One flapped past at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station at the start of our night drive, looking ghostly pale against the darkened fields.

Strigidae (Owls)

TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops choliba*) – One calling from a tree right near the entrance to the Aripo Agricultural Research Station ended our picnic supper with a flourish, giving us great views as it peered around from its branch.

SPECTACLED OWL (*Pulsatrix perspicillata*) – Those who went for a night walk with the Asa Wright guide on the tour's first evening heard the call of this species echoing eerily through the dark forest. [*]

FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) [*]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON PAURAUQUE (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – We scuttled progressively closer and closer to a bird sitting on a grassy track in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, resulting in fine scope views for all from about 20 yards away.

WHITE-TAILED NIGHTJAR (*Caprimulgus cayennensis*) – One sitting in a tree at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station stayed put while we piled out of the vans for a closer look.

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

COMMON POTOO (*Nyctibius griseus*) – Our first was one hunting from a fence post well out across the fields at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station -- looking like little more than a giant glowing eyeball. We had back views of another snoozing on a mangrove branch on our Caroni Swamp boat trip.

Steatornithidae (Oilbird)

OILBIRD (*Steatornis caripensis*) – An afternoon visit to Dunstan Cave brought us fine views of a handful of birds wobbling on their roosting ledges high on the cliff walls. This is the world's only nocturnal fruit-eating bird.

Apodidae (Swifts)

SHORT-TAILED SWIFT (*Chaetura brachyura*) – Widespread at the lowland end of Tobago, including many zipping low over the weedy ponds at Bon Accord.

GRAY-RUMPED SWIFT (*Chaetura cinereiventris*)

FORK-TAILED PALM-SWIFT (*Tachornis squamata*) – A handful of twittering birds flashed back and forth through the rainy skies over Waller Field, seen while we waited for the Epaulet Oriole to make its appearance. This is another species tied to the Moriche Palms; it nests within the fronds.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN (*Florisuga mellivora*) – Particularly common at Asa Wright, where they jostled with each other and every other hummingbird that came within 10 feet of a hummingbird feeder!

RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT (*Glaucis hirsutus*)

GREEN HERMIT (*Phaethornis guy*) – Two buzzed around the heliconias and torch ginger plants at Asa Wright -- and even occasionally made an appearance at the hummingbird feeders near the veranda. The long white-tipped tail of this dark species is distinctive.

LITTLE HERMIT (*Phaethornis longuemareus*)

RUBY-TOPAZ HUMMINGBIRD (*Chrysolampis mosquitus*)

GREEN-THROATED MANGO (*Anthracothorax viridigula*) – One perched atop a mangrove near the start of our Caroni Swamp boat trip gave good views -- until it chased off after another that flew past.

BLACK-THROATED MANGO (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*)

TUFTED COQUETTE (*Lophornis ornatus*)

LONG-BILLED STARTHROAT (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – One visited the spiky orange ginger flowers below the Asa Wright veranda on our second morning, dazzling us with that blue crown - red throat combination. The white rump patch is a useful ID feature for starthroats.

BLUE-CHINNED SAPPHIRE (*Chlorestes notata*) – Regular around the vervain flowers below the Asa Wright veranda. At one point, it perched right

beside the steps up to the veranda, staying there even when we walked to within inches of it when returning from our outing on the Discovery trail. We could have reached out and touched it!

WHITE-TAILED SABREWING (*Campylopterus ensipennis*) – Gratifyingly common along the Gilpin Trace, including one male having a vigorous bath in a little pool along the creek.

WHITE-CHESTED EMERALD (*Amazilia brevirostris*)

COPPER-RUMPED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia tobaci*) – Common and widespread, seen on every day of the tour.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

GREEN-BACKED TROGON (*Trogon viridis*)

GUIANAN TROGON (*Trogon violaceus*) – A trio along the Blanchisseuse road cooperated nicely, sitting for long minutes and allowing good scope studies. This species was recently split from the Violaceous Trogon complex.

COLLARED TROGON (*Trogon collaris*) – A fruit-eating female was a highlight along the Discovery trail on our first morning at Asa Wright Later, we found a male on the Gilpin Trace in Tobago.

Momotidae (Motmots)

TRINIDAD MOTMOT (*Momotus bahamensis*) – Quick glimpses of a few visiting the fruit feeders at Asa Wright, with far more satisfying views of many on Tobago. The one mooching scraps near the Gilpin Trace picnic shelter was especially photogenic!

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – One watched from a branch over a pond at Tobago Plantations; this is a winter visitor to the islands.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – One perched over a little stream in Nariva Swamp, allowing us all fine scope views. We saw others flashing off ahead of us on our boat trip in Caroni Swamp, and spotted one perched over the stream by the entrance to Blue Waters Inn.

AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – One of these little kingfishers got our Caroni Swamp boat trip off to a great start when it flew in and landed right in front of the boat while we waited for a Red-capped Cardinal to make an appearance.

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR (*Galbula ruficauda*) – Especially nice views of many hunting from vines and sticks along the Roxborough - Bloody Bay road. This species is locally known as King Hummingbird on the islands.

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

CHANNEL-BILLED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) – At least two -- and sometimes three -- perched up in the "toucan tree", an emergent Wild Nutmeg down the hill from the Asa Wright veranda on several mornings. We heard their frog-like yelping on multiple days.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*)

RED-RUMPED WOODPECKER (*Veniliornis kirkii*)

GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – An ongoing territorial dispute between two pairs near the start of the Discovery trail at Asa Wright meant we had repeated fine views of these tropical woodpeckers as they interacted.

LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*)

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

PALE-BREASTED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis albescens*) – We heard the sneezy "a-choo" call of this species on several days. [*]

STRIPE-BREASTED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis cinnamomea*) [N]

YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – One bounced around on a fence around a pasture at the Aripo Livestock Station, showing its yellow chin nicely in the scopes.

STREAKED XENOPS (*Xenops rutilans*)

PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – A trio above a little ant swarm on Las Lapas trail gave us good chance for study as they hunted for fleeing insects.

STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER (*Dendroplex picus*)

COCOA WOODCREEPER (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – One of these big woodcreepers -- largest woodcreeper found on the two islands -- hitched its way steadily up a skinny tree near the bellbird lek, checking for tasty morsels on the way.

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

GREAT ANTSHRIKE (*Taraba major*) – A male crept his way higher and higher through a bamboo patch right beside the Blanchisseuse road -- conveniently always next to the only yellow stalks in the stand, which made him easy to find. How about those red eyes?!

BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE (*Sakesphorus canadensis*)

BARRED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – A territorial male near the veranda at Asa Wright chortled from steps and light posts and fence rails and vervain bushes and ...

PLAIN ANTVIREO (*Dysithamnus mentalis*)

WHITE-FLANKED ANTWREN (*Myrmotherula axillaris*)

WHITE-FRINGED ANTWREN (*Formicivora grisea*)

SILVERED ANTBIRD (*Sclateria naevia*) – One crept through the mangrove roots near a little stream in Nariva Swamp, requiring some patience on our part to get a look.

WHITE-BELLIED ANTBIRD (*Myrmeciza longipes*) – A male moved closer and closer to the Blanchisseuse road, eventually working his way right to the bottom of the little bank we were standing on -- giving us all great views as he rummaged through the leaf litter between loud bouts of singing.

Formicariidae (Antthrushes)

BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH (*Formicarius analis*) – One, looking rather like a tiny bantam chicken, strode through the undergrowth just uphill

from the Blanchisseuse road, showing well for a few moments before vanishing back over the ridge. We certainly all heard it sing (and sing and sing)!

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)

FOREST ELAENIA (*Myiopagis gaimardii*)

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*)

OLIVE-STRIPED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes olivaceus*) – One in a fruiting tree along the Blanchisseuse road played hard to get for a while before finally moving to our side of the tree.

OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes oleagineus*)

SLATY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Leptopogon superciliaris*)

NORTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER (*Sublegatus arenarum*) – A trio bounced through the mangroves at Caroni Swamp, moving higher and higher.

YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias flaviventris*)

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER (*Contopus cooperi*) – One of these winter visitors hunted from a dead snag along the Blanchisseuse road.

TROPICAL PEWEE (*Contopus cinereus*)

FUSCOUS FLYCATCHER (*Cnemotriccus fuscatus*)

PIED WATER-TYRANT (*Fluvicola pica*)

WHITE-HEADED MARSH TYRANT (*Arundinicola leucocephala*)

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTILA (*Attila spadiceus*) – We heard the rather maniacal song of this big flycatcher down the hill from the Asa Wright veranda on several days and along the Blanchisseuse road a couple of times, but (other than for me) our only view was of a bird flashing through the trees. [*]

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)

VENEZUELAN FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus venezuelensis*) – One in a fruiting tree right near where we'd parked the bus, at the head of the Gilpin trail, called repeatedly -- drawing our attention. We had great views of its all dark undertail, and overall lack of rufous in the plumage, as it plucked little fruits from the tree and made sallies after insects.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – Though we spotted one on a telephone wire at Orange Valley (briefly interrupting our search for Bicolored Conebill), our best views came on Tobago -- particularly at the Tobago Plantations wastewater ponds, where one calling bird hunted from trees along the fence line.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)

BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER (*Megarynchus pitangua*)

SULPHURY FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannopsis sulphurea*) – Scope views of one sitting on a big horizontal palm frond, looking fed up with the rain at Waller Field.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Particularly nice views of one on a wire at Waterloo, distracting us briefly from our search for Bicolored Conebill.

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

BEARDED BELLBIRD (*Procnias averano*) – One tocked from a perch about 20 feet off the ground along the Discovery trail, his forest of wattles swinging with the percussive effort of his song. We all agreed that this one definitely sounds like a CRACKED bell!

Pipridae (Manakins)

WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN (*Manacus manacus*)

BLUE-BACKED MANAKIN (*Chiroxiphia pareola*)

GOLDEN-HEADED MANAKIN (*Pipra erythrocephala*) – Several -- both males and females -- plucked tiny berries from fruiting trees near the Asa Wright veranda and along the Discovery trail. Some of the group even caught a glimpse of the scarlet thighs of the male.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

WHITE-WINGED BECARD (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

RED-EYED VIREO (MIGRATORY CHIVI) (*Vireo olivaceus chivi*)

SCRUB GREENLET (*Hylophilus flavipes*)

GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET (*Hylophilus aurantiifrons*)

RUFOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – Two preening on a wire near where we found our Trinidad Euphonias gave us good looks at their distinctively pale rumps and butterscotch-colored breasts.

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – Our best looks came during our lunch stop at Manzanilla Beach, when we found a few resting on nearby telephone wires. We also had several pairs zooming around over the first fields at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station.

WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW (*Tachycineta albiventer*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A few of these winter visitors fluttered over the wastewater treatment ponds in Bon Accord.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

RUFOUS-BREASTED WREN (*Pheugopedius rutilus*)

HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon clarus*) – Fine views of one busy bird provisioning a nest in the eaves of a barn at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station. In between ferrying mouthfuls of food to the kids, it was also carrying mouthfuls of dead grass into a nearby fencing

pipe -- apparently starting a new nest for the next brood! [N]

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

LONG-BILLED GNATWREN (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

YELLOW-LEGGED THRUSH (*Turdus flavipes*)

COCOA THRUSH (*Turdus fumigatus*)

SPECTACLED THRUSH (*Turdus nudigenis*)

WHITE-NECKED THRUSH (*Turdus albicollis*) – Especially nice views along the Discovery trail, where one bounced down the path ahead of us, leading the way to the bellbird lek. The white on this species is restricted to a tiny collar just below the throat.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – Common on both islands, including one pair defending the fruit feeders at Asa Wright and another pair patrolling the restaurant at Blue Waters Inn.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)

MASKED YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*) – A male chipped at us from a scrubby stand of trees near the back entrance to Waller Field, showing well his namesake masked face.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

TROPICAL PARULA (*Setophaga pitiayumi*) – "The guys" spotted one of these among a mixed flock on Las Lapas trail while "the girls" were lagging behind using the bushes. No fair!

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) – One, looking quite yellow, twitched through a viny tangle high in a tree over the trail -- and the army ants -- at Las Lapas.

Coerebidae (Bananaquit)

BANANAQUIT (*Coereba flaveola*) – If you had a dollar for every one you saw, you could probably have paid for the trip -- with money to spare! [N]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

BICOLORED CONEBILL (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – After flitting back and forth across the road a few times, a lovely blue male hitched his way up to the top of a nearby mangrove in Orange Valley for a good look around.

WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – A male high in the mango tree near the Guacharo trail turnoff showed his white shoulder patch nicely; his yellow-bellied female was a bit more circumspect.

WHITE-LINED TANAGER (*Tachyphonus rufus*)

SILVER-BEAKED TANAGER (*Ramphocelus carbo*) – Several females were regular visitors at the Asa Wright feeders, but the male only made one brief early morning appearance.

BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (*Thraupis episcopus*) – Regular on both islands, with the birds on Tobago (the endemic subspecies *tobagensis*) proving to be a rather electric blue. As Mahase said, the birds on Trinidad should really be called Gray-blue Tanagers!

PALM TANAGER (*Thraupis palmarum*)

TURQUOISE TANAGER (*Tangara mexicana*)

SPECKLED TANAGER (*Tangara guttata*) – Fine views of a half dozen or so swarming over the "trimmer tree" along Blanchisseuse road. On Trinidad, this species is only found in the highest parts of the Northern Range.

BAY-HEADED TANAGER (*Tangara gyrola*)

BLUE DACNIS (*Dacnis cayana*)

GREEN HONEYCREEPER (*Chlorophanes spiza*)

PURPLE HONEYCREEPER (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*)

RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – A little gang of these colorful birds perched near the ends of some branches in a Swamp Immortelle tree just outside Speyside, seen as we journeyed toward the rainforest.

GRAYISH SALTATOR (*Saltator coerulescens*)

Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)

BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT (*Volatinia jacarina*)

RUDDY-BREASTED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila minuta*)

SOOTY GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris fuliginosus*) – One, looking quite dusky in comparison to its nearby Blue-black cousins, was seen in a roadside tree along the Blanchisseuse road, near where we found our Trinidad Euphonia.

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris bicolor*) – One bouncing through a hedge near the parking lot at the Mount Irvine Bay hotel was a highlight of our LOOOOOOONG lunch break there.

SAFFRON FINCH (*Sicalis flaveola*) – A little group fed in the grass, then flitted up into a series of small trees at Carli Bay.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER (*Habia rubica*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-BREASTED BLACKBIRD (*Sturnella militaris*) – Good numbers of these handsome birds -- which are actually meadowlarks -- singing and chasing each other around in the pastures at the Aripo Livestock Station.

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris*)

YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) – Close views of one young male swiveling on a fence post near the barn at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, with a tree full of others near the overpass at Caroni Swamp. When they flew across the marshes, those yellow heads just GLOWED!

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*)

GIANT COWBIRD (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)

EPAULET ORIOLE (MORICHE) (*Icterus cayanensis chrysocephalus*) – A half hour of waiting in the rain (made far more tolerable by glasses of rum punch) led to fine views of a single bird perched high in one of the trees near the Moriche Palm grove at Waller Field. It was interesting how well the bird could hide its distinctive yellow shoulder and rump patches -- though its yellow crown patch was always visible.

YELLOW ORIOLE (*Icterus nigrogularis*)

YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE (*Cacicus cela*) [N]

CRESTED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Very common throughout, with some fun looks at several doing their somersaulting courtship displays in the big tree down the hill from the Asa Wright veranda, and some great studies of various greedy birds gobbling bananas on the fruit feeders. [N]

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

TRINIDAD EUPHONIA (*Euphonia trinitatis*) – A pair clambered around in a big patch of mistletoe, high in a tree along the Blanchisseuse road, giving us a nice chance to see the distinctively dark throat of the male.

VIOLACEOUS EUPHONIA (*Euphonia violacea*)

MAMMALS

GREATER WHITE-LINED BAT (*Saccopteryx bilineata*)

RED-TAILED SQUIRREL (*Sciurus granatensis*)

RED-RUMPED AGOUTI (*Dasyprocta agouti*) – Particularly common under the feeders at Asa Wright; until very recently, the staff left piles of bread there, which entices the normally shy forest denizens up into the open. Obviously, the agoutis are hopeful the tradition will resume!

EGYPTIAN MONGOOSE (*Herpestes ichneumon*) – One scampered across the road in front of the first van as we headed up to Caroni Swamp after lunch. [I]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Herps:

Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) Some of the group spotted one clambering through a roadside bush on a back road in the Aripo savanna. Unfortunately, it disappeared before the second van got close enough to see it.

Golden Tegu (*Tupinambis teguixin*) These were the large yellow and black lizards that regularly patrolled the ground under the feeders at Asa Wright.

Giant Ameiva (*Ameiva ameiva*) This was the speedy bright green lizard we saw in one of the pastures at the Aripo Livestock Station.

House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) A few of these were seen in the buildings at Asa Wright, searching for insects around the lights.

Tree Boa (*Corallus ruschenbergii*) This was the coiled up snake we spotted in the mangroves of Caroni Swamp.

Vine Snake (*Oxybelis aeneus*) Those who went on the night walk the first evening were treated to one of these.

Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*) Singles seen on several days, including one floating in one of the ponds at the Aripo Livestock Station during our night drive.

Cane Toad (*Bufo marinus*) These were the enormous toads we saw in the road during our night drive on the Aripo Livestock Station.

Yellow-throated Frog (*Mannophryne trinitatis*) These were the tiny (but very noisy) frogs we saw down by Dunstan Cave, while waiting our turns to see the Oilbirds.

Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) One of these critically endangered turtles surfaced several times near the boat as we made our way out to Little Tobago.

Totals for the tour: 210 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa