



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Trinidad & Tobago Feb. 2015**

Jan 30, 2015 to Feb 8, 2015

Eric Hynes & Tom Johnson

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



*This beach lunch on Trinidad was a beautiful preamble to an afternoon that included Pinnated Bitterns, Red-bellied Macaws, and Savanna Hawks. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.*

Intended as a broad introduction to the wonders and diversity of birding in the Neotropics, this edition of our Trinidad & Tobago tour had plenty of excitement and surprises as well as the welcome combination of excellent weather and a superbly fun group. Group favorites from the week included streamer-tailed Red-billed Tropicbirds and stunning Tufted Coquette, but we ended up with a broad diversity of votes for top species, a sure sign of a fun and successful tour!

Upon our arrival in Port of Spain, Trinidad, we transferred to Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC), our home base for six nights. We spent a considerable amount of time through the week on the Centre's famous veranda, watching the broad view of a valley covered in impressive primary forest and enjoying the myriad birds attending the fruit and hummingbird feeders below. Our observations of Channel-billed Toucans, Double-toothed Kite, and eleven species of hummingbirds were complemented by comfortable seats and beverage choices of coffee, tea, or rum punch, depending on the time of day, of course. Birding with rum punch in hand was to be a fun theme of the week at Asa Wright.

On our first full day together on Trinidad, we birded the AWNC Veranda and the Discovery Trail in the morning. While we found forest species such as White-flanked Antwren and Guianan Trogon, the real stars of the show were the male Bearded Bellbirds, clanging their bizarre and supremely loud songs from fairly low overhead in the subcanopy. After lunch, we joined our local guide Dave Ramlal and headed down the hill to the Aripo livestock station for open-land birding before dinner. Here we turned up specialties like White-headed Marsh-Tyrant and Green-rumped Parrotlets, and even saw a rarity in the form of a close flyover Aplomado Falcon. After dinner, we took off in the waning light to search for night birds, finding a close Tropical Screech-Owl, Common Potoo, and three species of nightjars, including Common Pauraque, White-tailed Nightjar, and several unexpected Rufous Nightjars. Great success!

Day two found us heading upslope from AWNC along the Blanchisseuse Road, birding the beautiful forests of the northern range along the way. Our early start sent us up to Morne Bleu with one target bird in mind... and we quickly met with success as a Trinidad Piping-Guan appeared in the open canopy of an isolated cecropia tree. We had amazing views of this critically endangered Cracid for about five minutes as it sang its worried, whistling song, then flew past us with a very loud wing clattering. The rest of the day was a blur after the piping-guan, but we did have great luck, finding Black-faced Antthrushes parading around on the ground, a territorial Chestnut Woodpecker, and soaring Ornate Hawk-Eagle and White Hawks.

Our next day on Trinidad sent us down into the lowlands, and we headed for the eastern side of the island. This was a strong raptor day, and as we neared Nariva Swamp, we found Savanna Hawk, Yellow-headed Caracara, Crested Caracara, and Gray-lined Hawk in short order. The wetlands here yielded Pinnated Bittern (Tom was almost sacrificed to the marsh during this endeavor) and Striped Cuckoo, and a late afternoon drive up Caneloupe Hill (complete with freshly harvested canteloupe handed to us through the van windows by a friendly farmer) allowed us to find a beautiful flock of Red-bellied Macaws before sunset caught up to us.

The morning of day four was spent in the Aripo Savanna, searching for scrub and forest edge species. We had quite a few run-ins with Zone-tailed Hawks, and also found Trinidad Euphonia and a surprise flyover Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift. We returned to AWNC in the afternoon for a hike downslope into a narrow creek valley that culminated with a delightful visit with our most bizarre birds of the trip, the Oilbirds. Dunston Cave is a narrow, close-topped ravine below AWNC that currently houses more than 150 Oilbirds. We went in two at a time to see these huge nocturnal

frugivores at their nesting sites and day roosts.

For our last full day on Trinidad, we headed to the west coast, where we birded mangrove edges and mudflats, finding migrant waterbirds like Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Whimbrel as well as mangrove specialists like Straight-billed Woodcreeper and the newly split Mangrove Rail. Our evening plans included a date in Caroni Swamp, where we took a comfortable boat trip to an island in the mangrove forest to watch waders return to roost for the evening -- including at least 2,000 incredible Scarlet Ibis as well as oodles of herons and egrets. More rum punch was enjoyed.

Day six sent the group island-hopping to Tobago on a twenty-minute flight; on Tobago, we met Gladwyn James, our driver and local guide, and took off on our next adventure. Quickly, we found some of the differences between the two islands, trading Gray-breasted Martin (Trinidad) for Caribbean Martin (Tobago), and adding many more Eared Doves and Gray Kingbirds. A stop at Grafton Estate helped us find White-fringed Antwren and Blue-backed Manakin, while lunch at Tobago Plantations led us to Purple Gallinules, Anhingas, and a surprise cluster of Fork-tailed Palm-Swifts, very rare for the island. We continued heading northeast until we reached our picturesque beach hotel, the Blue Waters Inn.

On our one full day on Tobago, we ventured up into the low mountains of the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, where a walk down the trail at Gilpin Trace helped us find the local White-tailed Sabrewing, territorial Great Black-Hawks, lekking Blue-backed Manakins, and a very exciting White-throated Spadebill. The afternoon allowed for a relaxing time around the grounds of Blue Waters Inn; the birding allowed for amazing views of Scrub Greenlets and Short-tailed Swifts as well as a massive kettle of Magnificent Frigatebirds, perhaps foreshadowing the seabird theme of the next day.

On the last day of the tour, we rode a glass-bottomed boat across from the Blue Waters Inn to Little Tobago Island, passing over a beautiful and fish-filled coral reef en route (and Hawksbill Turtles!). On Little Tobago, we were dazzled by scores of flying and nesting (at our feet, even!) Red-billed Tropicbirds, Brown and Red-footed boobies, and Magnificent Frigatebirds. We also caught up to the recently arrived Scaly-naped Pigeon and learned about seabird research on the island from our boat captain and island guide, Zolani.

Hardly ready to leave, we headed back across Tobago and flew to Trinidad for our last evening in Port of Spain. Our "favorite birds" tally at the final dinner helped us recall some of the finest birds and moments of the tour and let us enjoy the group atmosphere one last time (for this tour, at least).

Eric and I felt privileged to lead this trip for such a positive and interesting group. We hope this adventure will encourage further travel and birding in the Neotropics, and we definitely look forward to traveling with you again down the trail. Special thanks go to Dave Ramlal and Gladwyn James, our excellent local guides on this adventure.

Thanks, and safe journeys,

--Tom

---

#### 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*) – After eluding us for the first part of our stay at AWNC, we finally heard the mournful whistles of this secretive forest dweller on our last two days. [\*]

#### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – These colorful and odd tree ducks were in the ponds near Manzanilla Beach and at Caroni Swamp.

#### Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**RUFOUS-VENTED CHACHALACA** (*Ortalis ruficauda*) – Common on Tobago, including on the room railings at Blue Waters Inn; one of two national birds for T&T.

**TRINIDAD PIPING-GUAN** (*Pipile pipile*) – Outstanding! Early in the morning at Morne Bleu, we watched a piping-guan sing and then heard its absurd wing clatter as it flew past our group into fruiting trees. This species is critically endangered with a population estimated near 200 individuals; all live in Trinidad's Northern Range. [E]

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LEAST GREBE** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – These mini-grebes were diving along the edges of the lakes at the Tobago Plantation.

#### Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

**RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon aethereus*) – We saw these daily from our rooms at Tobago's Blue Waters Inn, and then visited their breeding island of Little Tobago. In addition to close views in flight, we got to see fish-bearing adults being chased by piratic Magnificent Frigatebirds and we also had up-close views of birds on their nests. One approached Tom on foot and required a helping hand to get airborne. Ginger and Ned picked this species as a trip favorite. [N]

#### Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) – These had a near-constant overhead presence during all of our coastal stops. The most memorable observations came from Little Tobago, where frigatebirds dove on tropicbirds and forced them to give up their fish meals. Jim picked this as his favorite bird of the tour.

#### Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*) – Nesting at Little Tobago; during our observation, these were outnumbered by the smaller Red-footed Boobies. [N]

**RED-FOOTED BOOBY** (*Sula sula*) – Light and dark morphs nested side-by-side on Little Tobago, giving us great comparisons of these small Sulids.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – We found these widespread cormorants along the west coast of Trinidad near Orange Valley and Carli Bay, and also saw them in direct comparison with Anhingas at Tobago Plantations.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) – Fishing and perched at the ponds in Tobago Plantations.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Regularly encountered along the coast, both on Trinidad and on Tobago. Gladwyn's recitation of a well-known pelican limerick sent us into a spiral of increasingly ridiculous poems toward the end of the tour (Rick was clearly the limerick king!).

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**PINNATED BITTERN** (*Botaurus pinnatus*) – Though we pieced together glimpses of three individuals at Nariva Swamp, the best views came when one flew out ahead of Tom as he tromped through the swamp.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – Encountered on the west coast of Trinidad and on Tobago.

**COCOI HERON** (*Ardea cocoi*) – We saw one of these South American mainland visitors perched high in a tree in the evening at the mouth of the Nariva River.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Several at various spots on both islands.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Common in the lowlands, especially at Caroni Swamp, where we saw several hundred go to roost.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Very common; more widespread on Trinidad.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – Widespread - at lowland sites on both islands; 300 went to roost at Caroni Swamp.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Extremely common; both islands.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Several on Tobago.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – We saw this small heron twice on Trinidad - once at the Aripo Livestock Station, and once at Caroni Swamp.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – These cosmopolitan herons were on the west coast of Trinidad and at Tobago Plantations.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – We saw three of these handsome herons, all in coastal areas; our best views were along the edges of the mangroves at Orange Valley.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**SCARLET IBIS** (*Eudocimus ruber*) – Wow! The undisputed highlight of our trip to Caroni Swamp - over 2,000 of these phenomenal birds arrived to roost on a forested island at dusk.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Extremely common.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Less common than Black Vulture, but still common on Trinidad.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Migrants were common along the coasts; especially common at Orange Valley.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**GRAY-HEADED KITE** (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – We saw these raptors twice - once at AWNC, and once on the Blanchisseuse Rd. The bird at the latter site ripped a wasp nest off a tree near our lunch stop; we watched at length as it extracted the wasp larvae out of the paper-like nest. An amazing experience!

**BLACK HAWK-EAGLE** (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – This was a tour full of hawk-eagles! We had multiple splendid views of this stocky raptor as it soared and whistled overhead. At one point, we watched from the AWNC veranda as two Black Hawk-Eagles tumbled through the sky in a courtship flight.

**ORNATE HAWK-EAGLE** (*Spizaetus ornatus*) – We couldn't get away from these normally hard-to-see raptors. Our first was before the official start of the tour, when most of the participants gathered for an evening veranda watch at AWNC - one of these massive raptors flew in and hunted briefly from a large tree below the veranda just before darkness fell. We later had several excellent flight views.

**DOUBLE-TOOTHED KITE** (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – One perched in a treetop below the AWNC veranda one morning before breakfast.

**LONG-WINGED HARRIER** (*Circus buffoni*) – A stunning light morph male carried a small animal right over us when we pulled off to the side of the road en route from AWNC to the west coast of Trinidad.

**COMMON BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – Very common on Trinidad; one day, we had 7 along the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**SAVANNA HAWK** (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) – Our views of these stunning, long-legged raptors were in the open habitats of the Aripo Livestock Station and Nariva Swamp.

**GREAT BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) – A pair called and perched nicely for us at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**WHITE HAWK** (*Pseudastur albicollis*) – A regular feature of the skies over the northern range of Trinidad; we saw these stunning raptors at AWNC and the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – Fairly common in the northern forests of Trinidad.

**GRAY-LINED HAWK** (*Buteo nitidus*) – We saw adults on several occasions on Trinidad, including one in close proximity to a Savanna Hawk and a Yellow-headed Caracara at Nariva.

**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – We saw this widespread raptor just three times during the tour.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – After struggling to get everyone on one of these Turkey Vulture look-alikes, we turned up at least 6 individuals in a day in savanna habitats below AWNC - amazing!

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**MANGROVE RAIL (ATLANTIC)** (*Rallus longirostris pelodramus*) – One skulked in the mangroves at Orange Valley. This species was split from Clapper Rail last year.



**GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides cajaneus*) – These were calling from the mangroves at Orange Valley; we also heard one on the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – Fairly common at Nariva Swamp on Trinidad and at the Tobago Plantations on Tobago.

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – Our only ones were in wetlands on Tobago.

*Aramidae (Limpkin)*

**LIMPKIN** (*Aramus guarauna*) – One performed briefly near our Pinnated Bittern spot at Nariva.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*) – Common in open country.

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – About 75 were with a flock of sandpipers at Carrillion.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**WATTLED JACANA** (*Jacana jacana*) – Common; many juveniles were following adults.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – Common/ widespread.

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*) – Common in freshwater.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – We saw these mid-sized waders on flats near Orange Valley on Trinidad and at a pond in Bon Accord on Tobago.

**WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – A flock of about 90 fed on the mudflats at Orange Valley.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – We compared these directly with Greater Yellowlegs at a small pond in Bon Accord.

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) – These fed on flats at Orange Valley and Carrillion.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – Many lined the fishing pier at Orange Valley. We saw more at the Blue Waters Inn on Tobago.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – 3 were at Aripo Livestock Station.

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) – A large flock of mixed peeps contained at least 20 Semipalmated Sandpipers; these were a small part of a group that contained mostly Western Sandpipers.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – Most of the 200+ peeps in a flock studied on Trinidad were this species.

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – We saw these mixed with yellowlegs and Willets at Orange Valley.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Common on the coast; many at Orange Valley.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (GRAELLSII)** (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) – 7 were at Orange Valley.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Common in coastal waters of both islands.

**BLACK SKIMMER (CINERASCENS)** (*Rynchops niger cinerascens*) – 40 were at Orange Valley, showing off their huge bills - a few even skimmed for us. One of Priscilla's favorites from the tour.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Common in urban areas and towns. [I]

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – We found far more of these common pigeons on Tobago than on Trinidad.

**SCALED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas speciosa*) – We saw these stunners a few times in Trinidad's northern range; two that we scoped at AWCN were particularly nice.

**SCALY-NAPED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas squamosa*) – One flew past a few times on Little Tobago; another was on the utility wires at the entrance to Blue Waters Inn. This is a vagrant from the Caribbean that seems to be starting to colonize Little Tobago and Tobago.

**RUDDY GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Extremely common.

**WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – We first encountered the species in the lower Arima Valley; we found to be easier to locate on Tobago.

**GRAY-FRONTED DOVE** (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) – One or two were frequent visitors to the feeding station at AWCN.

**EARED DOVE** (*Zenaida auriculata*) – We first encountered this dove near Caroni Swamp, but they were everywhere on Tobago.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – These large cuckoos wolf-whistled in several places; great views came along the Blanchisseuse Rd. when two flew over our heads and perched, climbing around in the canopy.

**STRIPED CUCKOO** (*Tapera naevia*) – We heard a few calling at Nariva Swamp; eventually, one popped out along a weedy edge and allowed for nice scope views. One of Rick's favorites.

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – Very common in open areas and edge habitat, especially at Nariva Swamp.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops choliba*) – We heard and saw these almost nightly at AWCN, and saw one at Aripo Livestock Station during our night drive.

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – We heard these every day at AWCN, and saw them in the evenings twice.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**COMMON PAURAQUE** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – Abundant at Aripo Livestock Station during our night drive.

**WHITE-TAILED NIGHTJAR** (*Hydropsalis cayennensis*) – We saw and heard several of these nicely during the night drive at Aripo Livestock Station.

**RUFIOUS NIGHTJAR** (*Antrostomus rufus*) – A surprise! We heard 4 very well and saw some eyeshine of 2 at Aripo Livestock Station. Eric made a very nice audio recording, which is embedded here in the trip list. [\*]

*Nyctibiidae (Potoos)*

**COMMON POTOO** (*Nyctibius griseus*) – Great views in the scope of one perched on a fencepost at Aripo Livestock Station.

*Steatornithidae (Oilbird)*

**OILBIRD** (*Steatornis caripensis*) – Incredible - the experience of walking down to the entrance of Dunston Cave and seeing the ledges full of these hulking nocturnal frugivores was truly unforgettable.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**SHORT-TAILED SWIFT** (*Chaetura brachyura*) – Common, both on Trinidad and on Tobago; our best views were on Little Tobago, where we had stunning eye-level views at the seabird overlook.

**BAND-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Chaetura spinicaudus*) – We had our best views from the veranda at AWCN, where we compared these *Chaetura* swifts directly to Gray-rumped Swifts.

**GRAY-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – This was the most common *Chaetura* swift that we saw on Trinidad.

**LESSER SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT** (*Panyptila cayennensis*) – Eric picked out one of these sharp swifts over the Arima Bypass area - an excellent sighting.

**FORK-TAILED PALM-SWIFT** (*Tachornis squamata*) – Common in lowlands on Trinidad; we also saw 4 at Tobago Plantations - the species is very rare on Tobago, so this was pretty exciting.

*Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

**WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN** (*Florisuga mellivora*) – This amazing hummer is common around AWCN; also seen at Gilpin Trace on Tobago. A favorite of Dale and Imelda.

**RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT** (*Glaucis hirsutus*) – We saw these almost every day at AWCN; Gladwyn showed us a nest at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**GREEN HERMIT** (*Phaethornis guy*) – This large, slim hummer was an infrequent visitor to the AWCN feeders.

**LITTLE HERMIT** (*Phaethornis longuemareus*) – An infrequent visitor to flowers around the AWCN veranda.

**WHITE-TAILED GOLDENTHROAT** (*Polytmus gainumbi*) – We had nice views of this surprise find along the road near the mouth of the Nariva River.

**RUBY-TOPAZ HUMMINGBIRD** (*Chrysolampis mosquitos*) – This beauty appeared in front of us a few times on Trinidad, including from the AWCN veranda, but they were considerably easier to find on Tobago.

**GREEN-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax viridigula*) – We saw a few of this locally restricted species in Caroni Swamp on Trinidad.

**BLACK-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) – Common on both Trinidad and Tobago. We had excellent views of a female on a nest near Speyside on Tobago.

**TUFTED COQUETTE** (*Lophornis ornatus*) – We saw these amazing, tiny hummers every day at AWCN. They were particularly fond of the verbena flowers, and were the favorite species of the tour for Walt, Linda, and Jean.

**LONG-BILLED STARHROAT** (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – At least two visited the feeders at AWCN.

**BLUE-CHINNED SAPPHIRE** (*Chlorestes notata*) – Up to 3 were attending the feeders the AWCN feeders, and we also saw the species on the Blanchisseuse Rd. and at Nariva Swamp.

**WHITE-TAILED SABREWING** (*Campylopterus ensipennis*) – We saw at least 6 of these large hummingbirds during our walk at Gilpin Trace, including a bird on a nest.

**WHITE-CHESTED EMERALD** (*Amazilia brevirostris*) – Very common at AWCN.

**COPPER-RUMPED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tobaci*) – Common on both Trinidad and Tobago.

*Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**GREEN-BACKED TROGON** (*Trogon viridis*) – We had a brief encounter with calling bird at our lunch stop along the Blanchisseuse Rd. (where the Gray-headed Kite was eating the wasp larvae).

**GUIANAN TROGON** (*Trogon violaceus*) – These trogons entertained us several times; 3 were in view at once on the Blanchisseuse Rd. below AWCN.

**COLLARED TROGON** (*Trogon collaris*) – These trogons were seen at AWCN almost daily.

*Momotidae (Motmots)*

**TRINIDAD MOTMOT** (*Momotus bahamensis*) – Fairly common on both islands, though down right abundant and approachable on Tobago. [E]

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle torquata*) – We found these large kingfishers at Cacandy and Nariva Swamp.

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – One was at the ponds along the entrance road to Tobago Plantations.

**AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – We heard these tiny kingfishers in the mangroves at Nariva, Cacandy, and Caroni, but failed to see one. [\*]

*Galbulidae (Jacamars)*

**RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – Fairly common in forest, especially on Tobago. We had stupendous views in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve on Tobago.

*Ramphastidae (Toucans)*

**CHANNEL-BILLED TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) – These large toucans sat up for good scope views below the AWCN veranda late in our stay there.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) – Common on Tobago; amusingly, we saw one that appeared to be attempting to enlarge a small hole in a steel utility pole.

**RED-RUMPED WOODPECKER** (*Veniliornis kirkii*) – One stuck to the canopy along the driveway of AWCN during one of our afternoon walks there.

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – Seen on both islands, but our best views came from the veranda at AWCN.

**CHESTNUT WOODPECKER** (*Celeus elegans*) – One of these beautiful woodpeckers came in overhead during our adventure on the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**LINEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – Fairly common, though we heard them more often than we saw them. Our best views were at AUNC.

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – We had nice views of this uncommon scavenger in the roadside palm groves near Nariva Swamp.

**YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA** (*Milvago chimachima*) – We saw about 5 in the area of Nariva Swamp.

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – We saw these swift migrant falcons at Aripo Livestock Station and Nariva Swamp.

**APLOMADO FALCON** (*Falco femoralis*) – This species is a rarity on Trinidad; one that flew over during our evening rum punch break at Aripo Livestock Station was a real highlight, and was one of Ned's favorites for the tour.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – One soared over during our Greater Ani search at Cacandy.

#### Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

**BLUE-HEADED PARROT** (*Pionus menstruus*) – A flock of 5 flew over during a walk along the Blanchisseuse Rd., but we never found any sitting birds.

**YELLOW-CROWNED PARROT** (*Amazona ochrocephala*) – One sat up in a treetop with the Red-bellied Macaws at Canteloupe Hill above Nariva Swamp.

**ORANGE-WINGED PARROT** (*Amazona amazonica*) – This is the abundant Amazona parrot of both islands; seen every day.

**GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET** (*Forpus passerinus*) – We followed a small group along the driveway at Aripo Livestock Station.

**RED-BELLIED MACAW** (*Orthopsittaca manilatus*) – 45 were at Canteloupe Hill above Nariva Swamp; we had excellent views and flight and nice scope views of some feeding and loafing birds. Real stunners.

#### Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

**GREAT ANTSHRIKE** (*Taraba major*) – A skulky female on the trail at AUNC provided our best view of the trip.

**BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE** (*Sakesphorus canadensis*) – Our first was in the mangroves at Nariva; we went on to see this spectacular antshrike on several more occasions, including a very visible pair near the Aripo Livestock Station.

**BARRED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – Common on both islands, including a very bold pair at the AUNC veranda.

**PLAIN ANTIVIREO** (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – We found one each at Blanchisseuse Rd. and on Tobago at Gilpin Trace.

**WHITE-FLANKED ANT WREN** (*Myrmotherula axillaris*) – Several good views at AUNC and Blanchisseuse Rd.

**WHITE-FRINGED ANT WREN** (*Formicivora grisea*) – Common in the forest on Tobago, including some excellent views in the scrub above the Blue Waters Inn.

**SILVERED ANT BIRD** (*Sclateria naevia*) – Two were in the mangroves near the mouth of the Nariva River. Our best views were of a female.

**WHITE-BELLIED ANT BIRD** (*Myrmeciza longipes*) – Though we heard these along the Blanchisseuse Rd. on several occasions, we only saw them once, when a pair skulked around the edge of the forest along the roadside.

#### Formicariidae (Antthrushes)

**BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH** (*Formicarius analis*) – Two walked in the shadows at close range in the forest along the Blanchisseuse Rd., giving us amazing views.

#### Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

**GRAY-THROATED LEAFTOSSER** (*Sclerurus albicularis*) – On our way down the trail to the Oilbird cave at AUNC, we heard, then saw a leaf-tosser very well in the dense forest understory.

**OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER** (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – 2 of these small woodcreepers performed nicely at the Main Ridge Forest Reserve on Tobago.

**PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – We saw this drab woodcreeper on both islands.

**COCOA WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – This large woodcreeper provided frequent contributions to the tour's soundscape. We saw them at AUNC, Blanchisseuse Rd., and Blue Waters Inn.

**STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendroplex picus*) – We found these active woodcreepers in the edges of mangrove forest on Trinidad.

**STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – One was at the edge of the park at Carli Bay on Trinidad where we ate lunch one day.

**STREAKED XENOPS** (*Xenops rutilans*) – One was at Aripo Savanna as part of a mixed flock that also included Black-crested Antshrikes.

**YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL** (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – We found these open-land Furnariids at Aripo Livestock Station and around Nariva Swamp. A pair was working on a stick nest at Aripo.

**STRIPE-BREADED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis cinnamomea*) – We found these forest edge spinetails on the Blanchisseuse Rd. and at Gilpin Trace. Their "keep going" calls were a great asset in tracking down these skulkers.

#### Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**SOUTHERN BEARDESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – These small, stubby flycatchers were calling at many locations; our best views were from the AUNC veranda.

**FOREST ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) – One was in the Aripo Savanna and offered close, roadside views.

**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – Common on both islands.

**OLIVE-STRIPED FLYCATCHER** (*Mionectes olivaceus*) – One was on the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – These were seen daily in the Trema trees at AUNC and along the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**SLATY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Leptopogon superciliaris*) – These helmeted flycatchers were at AUNC and Blanchisseuse Rd. on a few occasions; a woven nest was under an overhanging bank along the AUNC driveway.

**NORTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER** (*Sublegatus arenarum*) – Our Caroni Swamp boat trip turned up a few of these shy flycatchers in the wet mangrove forest.

**YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias sulphurens*) – We saw 1-2 at AUNC on a few occasions; one flew under the veranda and

perched in the rafters for an extended spell.

**YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias flaviventris*) – We heard these small flycatchers make their high-pitched, slurred calls on many occasions in a variety of forest types, but our best views came in the Aripo Savanna near our only Forest Elaenia.

**WHITE-THROATED SPADEBILL** (*Platyrinchus mystaceus*) – One highly charismatic individual along Gilpin Trace was a real highlight and an unexpected thrill.

**BRAN-COLORED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) – One was along the edge of a large field at the Arima Bypass.

**EULER'S FLYCATCHER** (*Lathrotriccus euleri*) – We found this forest interior flycatcher during our walk to the Oilbird cave at AWCN.

**TROPICAL PEWEE** (*Contopus cinereus*) – A few were along the AWCN driveway during an afternoon walk. We admired the pale loreal area and short primary projection that helped us identify this dull flycatcher.

**FUSCOUS FLYCATCHER** (*Cnemotriccus fuscatus*) – This flycatcher was a new addition to our trip during the walk at Gilpin Trace.

**PIED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola pica*) – These striking open-land flycatchers were along water at Aripo Livestock Station and Nariva Swamp on Trinidad.

**WHITE-HEADED MARSH TYRANT** (*Arundinicola leucocephala*) – These water-loving flycatchers were at Aripo Livestock Station and in the surrounding savanna areas.

**BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – We repeatedly heard the strident dawn song of this canopy flycatcher, but we never found one for views. [\*]

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – One was on the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**VEZUELAN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus venezuelensis*) – We heard a few before one finally came in overhead at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – Our best views came at Carli Bay just before we ate lunch.

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Abundant and widespread on Trinidad.

**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – Less abundant than kiskadees but still common; we found these large flycatchers by call frequently at AWCN and along the Blanchisseuse Rd.

**PIRATIC FLYCATCHER** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – Our best views were of one on the wires at AWCN (while watching a Yellow Oriole in the same area).

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Abundant in open habitats.

**GRAY KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – On Trinidad, we saw these large-billed kingbirds at Nariva Swamp; on Tobago, they were in Bon Accord and at Tobago Plantations.

#### Cotingidae (Cotingas)

**BEARDED BELLBIRD** (*Procnias averano*) – Locally common around the forest at AWCN, we found hardly any others in the forest in the northern range of Trinidad. A walk down the hill from the veranda led us to a cluster of singing males, who posed for phenomenal views.

#### Pipridae (Manakins)

**BLUE-BACKED MANAKIN** (*Chiroxiphia pareola*) – Great views on Tobago, including a small cluster of lekking males at Gilpin Trace.

**WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN** (*Manacus manacus*) – Common in forest in the northern range of Trinidad. Most of ours were at AWCN, where a few were often feeding on fruit near the centre's buildings.

**GOLDEN-HEADED MANAKIN** (*Ceratopipra erythrocephala*) – Several fleeting glimpses along the Blanchisseuse Rd. and at AWCN.

#### Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

**BLACK-TAILED TITYRA** (*Tityra cayana*) – One perched up on a treetop below the AWCN veranda.

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

**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) – We saw "Chivi" vireos on Tobago, with our best views near the border of the Main Ridge Forest Reserve.

**SCRUB GREENLET** (*Hylophilus flavipes*) – Common on Tobago.

**GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET** (*Hylophilus aurantiifrons*) – Common in forest on Trinidad.

**RUFUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – These large vireos gave their rollicking, whistled songs at many places on Trinidad. Our best views of these canopy birds came at Carli Bay, where we saw two about fifteen feet above the ground - amazing!

#### Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – This pale-rumped swallow was in several open areas on Trinidad, including the Arima Bypass area.

**CARIBBEAN MARTIN** (*Progne dominicensis*) – Common on Tobago - great views at Tobago Plantations.

**GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*) – Common on Trinidad.

**WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta albiventer*) – These slim swallows were frequent companions in open country and coastal areas on Trinidad.

#### Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Common and widespread; both islands.

**RUFUS-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) – Fairly common, especially around AWCN, where we eventually saw a few. Also at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

#### Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

**LONG-BILLED GNATWREN** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – We struggled to see this little guy - our best was a furtive individual at Morne Bleu near the piping-guan tree.

#### Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**YELLOW-LEGGED THRUSH** (*Turdus flavipes*) – After a few fleeting glimpses, we had one that sat stock still in the open for us at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**COCOA THRUSH** (*Turdus fumigatus*) – Common - seen each day at AWCN.

**SPECTACLED THRUSH** (*Turdus nudigenis*) – A frequent visitor to the feeders at AWCN.

**WHITE-NECKED THRUSH** (*Turdus albicollis*) – More of a skulker than the previous two species, but we did get good looks at the AWNC feeding station and in the forest there.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus gilvus*) – Common and widespread on both islands.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – A fairly common wintering bird; we heard these warblers chipping from streams and dense forest (including mangroves) more often than we saw them.

**MASKED YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*) – Our day in the Aripo Savanna turned up a few of these talkative warblers.

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – We found a few of these migrants at various spots on Trinidad; our biggest count was 5 at Caroni Swamp.

**TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitiayumi*) – We saw just a few of these little jewels on Trinidad - on the Blanchisseuse Rd. and in the Arima Bypass area.

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Common and widespread, especially in lowland edges.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) – A few bickered in front of us on the Blanchisseuse Rd.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

**MASKED CARDINAL** (*Paroaria nigrogenis*) – Just before our boat departure to see the Scarlet Ibis roost at Caroni Swamp, we were thrilled to see this gorgeous bird bathing in a puddle at close range.

**WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – A very common visitor to the feeders at AWNC (though its common name is puzzling).

**SILVER-BEAKED TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus carbo*) – Common and widespread on Trinidad.

**BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – We saw these in many places on both islands.

**PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Common on both islands.

**SPECKLED TANAGER** (*Tangara guttata*) – 2 on the Blanchisseuse Rd. were particularly memorable.

**TURQUOISE TANAGER** (*Tangara mexicana*) – We ended up running into this gem quite a few times, including repeatedly in the Trema trees off the AWNC veranda.

**BAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara gyrola*) – Great views at AWNC and along the Blanchisseuse Rd. A real show-off in the color department.

**BLUE DACNIS** (*Dacnis cayana*) – We had some nice views in savanna edge habitat as well as in flowering trees at AWNC.

**PURPLE HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) – An abundant feeder bird at AWNC. Gorgeous beyond words.

**RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – These startlingly colored songbirds showed well for us in the treetops at AWNC and along the road in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve on Tobago.

**GREEN HONEYCREEPER** (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – A common feeder bird at AWNC.

**BICOLORED CONEBILL** (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – Excellent views of responsive birds in the mangroves at Cacandy and in Caroni Swamp.

**SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*) – A few sat around in the park near our lunch spot at Carli Bay.

**GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH** (*Sicalis luteola*) – We found these with the grassquits and seedeaters near the buffalypso paddock at Aripo Livestock Station.

**BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Omnipresent in open areas.

**RUDDY-BREASTED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila minuta*) – 3 of these uncommon seedeaters posed for us in the company of Grassland Yellow-Finches at Aripo Livestock Station.

**BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – Everywhere!

**SOOTY GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris fuliginosus*) – After a few close calls, most of us got on a cooperative bird near the Arena Forest Reserve.

**BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris bicolor*) – Common on Tobago; we had nice views along the driveway of the Grafton Caledonia Bird Sanctuary.

**GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – We ran into several in edge habitat on Trinidad, including Mexico Rd. and the Blanchisseuse Rd.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**RED-CROWNED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia rubica*) – Good views along the trail near the bellbirds at AWNC; also from the Blanchisseuse Rd.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**RED-BREASTED BLACKBIRD** (*Sturnella militaris*) – Our best views of these strange meadowlarks came from the pastures of the Aripo Livestock Station.

**CARIB GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus lugubris*) – Common and widespread on both islands.

**YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD** (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) – A few sat up for amazing views near our Pinnated Bittern stop at Nariva Swamp.

**SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Common in open areas, especially.

**GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – 3 were in the fields at Canteloupe Hill at the spot where we watched Red-bellied Macaws and drank rum punch.

**YELLOW ORIOLE** (*Icterus nigrogularis*) – Fairly common, with good views around the buildings at AWNC. An active nest there made for some fun action, too.

**YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE** (*Cacicus cela*) – A comparison of the nests of these with the nests of their larger relatives, the Crested Oropendolas, was a nice feature of a pre-lunch stop during the Blanchisseuse Rd. day on Trinidad.

**CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Common and huge; we saw and heard the remarkable song of these big songbirds daily from the AWNC veranda, and also at many other sites.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

**TRINIDAD EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia trinitatis*) – After struggling to find our first one at the Arima Bypass, we ended up finding several more in savanna habitats and in the mangroves at Cacandy and Caroni Swamp.

**VIOLACEOUS EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia violacea*) – Very common, much more so than Trinidad Euphonia. Excellent views at the AWNC feeders.



## MAMMALS

**COMMON OPOSSUM** (*Didelphis marsupialis*) – One came in after dusk to the AWCN feeding tables.

**GREATER WHITE-LINED BAT** (*Saccopteryx bilineata*) – These were the "sac-winged" bats that we saw at AWCN.

**PALLAS'S LONG-TONGUED BAT** (*Glossophaga soricina*) – These were the nectar bats that were gorging on the hummingbird feeders at AWCN after dusk.

**SILKY ANTEATER** (*Cyclopes didactylus*) – Amazing! One was curled up on a day roost in the mangroves at Caroni Swamp.

**RED-TAILED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus granatensis*) – The common squirrel of the trip.

**NORWAY (BROWN) RAT** (*Rattus norvegicus*) – Caroni Swamp near the buildings. [1]

**RED-RUMPED AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta agouti*) – Widespread in the northern range of Trinidad, and we also saw some in the yard of the Blue Waters Inn on Tobago.

**EGYPTIAN MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes ichneumon*) – One was seen by a few folks in the front van as we drove through the mangroves at Orange Valley. [1]

### Herps

**GREEN IGUANA** (*Iguana iguana*) – Several in trees, including during the Caroni boat trip.

**GIANT AMEIVA** (*Ameiva ameiva*) – Fairly common; this was the lizard on Trinidad that was smaller than the tegu, usually with gray and green body and a few longitudinal dorsal stripes. Variable in appearance.

**GOLDEN TEGU** (*Tupinambis teguixin*) – A common and occasionally startling sight on the grounds at AWCN.

**TREE BOA** (*Corallus ruschenbergerii*) – We saw these snakes curled up in mangroves in Caroni Swamp and also in Bon Accord, Tobago.

**SPECTACLED CAIMAN** (*Caiman crocodilus*) – Fairly common; good views during our Aripo Livestock Station night drive.

**CANE TOAD** (*Bufo marinus*) – Common; the large toad that we saw well at Aripo Livestock Station by the gatehouse.

**HAWKSBILL TURTLE** (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) – Excellent views from the glass-bottomed boat to Little Tobago.

---

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

---

**Totals for the tour: 227 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa**