



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Trinidad & Tobago Feb. 2020**

Feb 8, 2020 to Feb 17, 2020

Tom Johnson with Mahase Ramlal and Jason Radix

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



*Ribbons of Scarlet Ibis, over 6000 of them, streamed right past us on their way to roost at Caroni Swamp. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.*

The island nation of Trinidad and Tobago bridges the South American continent with the West Indies, offering us an easy way to dip our toes into the avifauna of the bird continent while enjoying refreshing breezes, seabirds, and Trinidadian hospitality along the way. Our group had a great time soaking in the early nesting season on these islands and even turned up some real surprises along the way - Yellow-throated Vireo, Eurasian Whimbrel, 3 Little Egrets, and Ring-billed Gull (continuing from our New Year's tour) added some vagrant spice.

Rare birds are exciting, but this tour is really all about immersion in the local birds and culture. That's why the majority of our stay was based out of world famous Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC henceforth) in the Northern Range of Trinidad. We woke up each morning to the dawn chorus and sipped coffee and tea on the veranda while watching dozens of hummingbirds, tanagers, and parrots at close range. We walked the trails at AWNC and found displaying Bearded Bellbirds and White-bearded Manakins, descended to the cave of the Oilbirds, craned our necks at a fruiting fig tree full of tanagers and flycatchers, and even spotted the secretive White-bellied Antbird posing on a log. Away from the Centre, we made day trips with picnic lunches to the northern part of the mountains, savannah habitats around Arima, and the vast wetlands and mangrove forests of the east and west coasts of Trinidad. It was important to save the top spectacle of this island for the final evening when we boarded a stable boat and slowly threaded our way into Caroni Swamp. Just before sunset, we sipped rum punch, ate cake, and watched thousands of Scarlet Ibis and herons arrive to their roosting island after a day foraging in the swamp, with American Flamingos striding by to the sides. It was absolutely spectacular - the kind of life highlight that can make an entire trip worthwhile in an instant.

Transitioning from the more continental-influenced avifauna of Trinidad to the more Caribbean-flavored island of Tobago, we learned about the quirks of biogeography that supply this small island with birds like Red-crowned Woodpecker and Scrub Greenlet that we didn't find over on Trinidad. In addition, we carefully picked through the shorebirds and waders at Bon Accord, finding vagrants like Eurasian Whimbrel and Little Egret. Our comfortable seaside hotel, Blue Waters Inn, gave us a chance to relax and swim in the sea just steps from our rooms. But we weren't just there to take in the gorgeous scenery and lounge by the beach. Two outings on Tobago really put a bow on the whole trip. First, we took a boat to Little Tobago Island and spent time in the seabird colonies there, admiring Red-billed Tropicbird and Audubon's Shearwater from just a few paces away and watching Red-footed and Brown boobies sail around and attend to their fuzzy chicks on the island's windward side. Finally, a half day outing to the Main Ridge Forest Reserve helped us find some of the prized forest birds of Tobago like White-tailed Sabrewing, Venezuelan Flycatcher, White-throated Spadebill, and Blue-backed Manakin - AND we spotted a Yellow-throated Vireo, a very rare visitor to this island.

Special thanks go to Mahase Ramlal on Trinidad, Jason Radix on Tobago, and Zolani Frank on Little Tobago for their expertise and camaraderie as local guides. Additionally, Martyn Kenefick on Trinidad was most hospitable at AWNC and shared lots of his knowledge about the island's birds with our group.

I am fortunate to lead tours to Trinidad and Tobago regularly, and I have really become attached to the birds and people here - and the food, too (can't wait until the next chance to pull over to the side of the road and gobble down some Doubles!). It was wonderful to share this visit with you, and I sincerely hope we cross paths in the field again soon.

Good birding,

## 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*) – The quavering whistles of this small, chicken-like bird rang out in the forests of Northern Trinidad. [\*]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – We saw 7 fly over at Caroni Swamp; another 6 were at the Bon Accord ponds on Tobago.

**WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL** (*Anas bahamensis*) – After missing the species entirely on our New Years trip, I was surprised to find 40 individuals at Bon Accord.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**RUFIOUS-VENTED CHACHALACA** (*Ortalis ruficauda*) – These loud, conspicuous cracids were all over in the forests of Tobago - and were also quite common on the grounds of our hotel. A few even came into the restaurant and sat in the rafters while looking for tasty morsels.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**AMERICAN FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus ruber*) – These tall pink wonders are not a typical feature of Trinidad, but a large flock arrived a few years ago and is still hanging around. This time, we found 62 birds at Caroni Swamp while searching for Scarlet Ibis.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LEAST GREBE** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – This tiny waterbird with the golden eye was on the Bon Accord ponds.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – We saw these introduced pigeons several times around Trinidad's lowlands. [I]

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Our first was at Orange Valley; later we saw many more on Tobago.

**SCALED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas speciosa*) – These stocky forest pigeons were a regular visit to the snags out in front of the AWNC veranda.

**RUDDY GROUND DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Common in the lowlands of both islands.

**WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – Most of our sightings were on Tobago - we even saw a couple walking along the driveway at Blue Waters Inn.

**GRAY-FRONTED DOVE** (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) – Mostly heard, but a few folks got locked onto one during a walk at AWNC. Trinidad only.

**EARED DOVE** (*Zenaida auriculata*) – Quite common around Tobago - like a short-tailed Mourning Dove.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**GREATER ANI** (*Crotophaga major*) – One was perched quietly in the mangroves at the beginning of our Caroni Swamp boat trip.

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – Common in the lowlands of both islands.

**SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – We saw these big, foxy cuckoos twice on Trinidad; the best sighting was of the bird that climbed up to the top of a tree at AWNC and then sailed overhead on short, rounded wings, really showing off that massive tail.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**COMMON PAURAQUE** (*Nyctidromus albigollis*) – Good views of territorial birds at Waller Field.

**WHITE-TAILED NIGHTJAR** (*Hydropsalis cayennensis*) – These nightjars were smaller with a thin display song; they were in more open habitats at Waller Field than the Pauriques.

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

**COMMON POTOO** (*Nyctibius griseus*) – One sat up on a tree and allowed us to scope it along a fenceline at Waller Field. Then, Jason pointed out a day-roosting individual on Tobago's Main Ridge.

Steatornithidae (Oilbird)

**OILBIRD** (*Steatornis caripensis*) – We had some excellent views of about 4 of these huge, spooky birds in the mouth of Dunston Cave. This is like a giant nightjar, but instead of pursuing insects for food, it plucks palm fruit from trees in the darkness and navigates using echolocation. Such a wonderful and strange bird, and a major highlight of any visit to Trinidad.

Apodidae (Swifts)

**SHORT-TAILED SWIFT** (*Chaetura brachyura*) – Our best views were overhead at Caroni Swamp and again at Bon Accord.

**BAND-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Chaetura spinicaudus*) – These small swifts were challenging to identify overhead in the Arima Valley, though we dedicated a few swift-watching sessions to their study.

**GRAY-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – This was the other small swift that we picked out of flocks at AWNC - instead of having a bright whitish strap across the rump (like Band-rumped), this species shows a large, pale gray rump patch. Also seen on the Main Ridge of Tobago.

**LESSER SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT** (*Panyptila cayennensis*) – We saw 1-2 birds overhead at AWNC on three separate days. Sky pandas!

**FORK-TAILED PALM-SWIFT** (*Tachornis squamata*) – About nine circled overhead in the Mauritia palm swamp at Waller Field.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN** (*Florisuga mellivora*) – A common large hummingbird at AWNC, where males dominate the sugar feeders.

**RUFIOUS-BREASTED HERMIT** (*Glaucis hirsutus*) – Though we had some quick sightings at AWNC, the best experience was with the nesting birds at Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**GREEN HERMIT** (*Phaethornis guy*) – Brandon saw one at AWNC, but this normally common hummer proved elusive for the rest of the group.

**LITTLE HERMIT** (*Phaethornis longuemareus*) – We found this small, buffy hermit attending small yellow flowers along the upper Discovery Trail at AWCN.

**BROWN VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri delphinae*) – Typically a scarce bird in northern Trinidad, but one individual has taken up residence at the AWCN veranda, where we saw it daily.

**RUBY-TOPAZ HUMMINGBIRD** (*Chrysolampis mosquitos*) – Stunning! Great views of males on several occasions, including at flowers in the gardens at AWCN.

**GREEN-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax viridigula*) – This mango was seen perched up along the edges of the mangrove swamp at Caroni during our boat trip.

**BLACK-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) – A common large hummer on both islands. Mahase took us to a special stretch of road near Waller Field and we saw ~8 mango nests on the utility wires in a relatively short stretch of road. Astounding!

**TUFTED COQUETTE** (*Lophornis ornatus*) – One of the top hummingbirds on Trinidad. Quite common around the AWCN gardens - quite easy to see this season, more so than my previous years of tours here.

**LONG-BILLED STARThroat** (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – One individual was a regular visitor to the veranda feeders at AWCN.

**BLUE-CHINNED SAPPHIRE** (*Chlorestes notata*) – We studied this green hummer with the aqua tones as it fed at flowers in the AWCN gardens. It didn't show up at the feeders very often, but the views at flowers were plenty good enough!

**WHITE-TAILED SABREWING** (*Campylopterus ensipennis*) – This large hummingbird is a special resident of Tobago's Main Ridge; we spotted a few in the canopy and had some good looks as they fed and picked spider webs out of the midstory (perhaps gathering nesting material).

**WHITE-CHESTED EMERALD** (*Amazilia brevirostris*) – This was one of the common small hummingbirds at the feeders at AWCN.

**COPPER-RUMPED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tobaci*) – A common hummingbird on both islands.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**MANGROVE RAIL (ATLANTIC)** (*Rallus longirostris pelodramus*) – After a bit of a wait, a pair of these rails sauntered into view in the mangrove forest at Orange Valley.

**GRAY-COWLED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides cajaneus*) – Mahase and Lester showed us this big, colorful rail in the mangroves at Caroni Swamp. Sometimes called "donkey bird" for its loud calls.

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – We saw this widespread waterbird several times in freshwater marshes.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinica*) – The best views were at the ponds with emergent vegetation at Tobago Plantations.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*) – Quite common, especially on the golf course at Tobago Plantations!

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – About four were mixed with other shorebirds at Orange Valley.

*Jacaniidae (Jacanas)*

**WATTLED JACANA** (*Jacana jacana*) – This shorebird with the long toes was common in freshwater wetland habitats.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**WHIMBREL (EUROPEAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) – This was the super rare "White-rumped" Whimbrel that we found foraging in a ditch at Bon Accord. Hudsonian Whimbrel is the American subspecies with the brown back and overall warmer brown color. This bird's white belly and cold gray tones raised my pulse when I first saw it; when we saw it fly, the white rump and underwings confirmed that this was a vagrant Eurasian Whimbrel! The European subspecies *phaeopus* is the most likely candidate here, though I'm not comfortable excluding the Asian subspecies *variegatus* with certainty. Recent genetic evidence suggests that there is no gene flow between American and Eurasian Whimbrels, and I think we can expect a split at some point in the future.

**WHIMBREL (HUDSONIAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – Most of the Whimbrels we saw were of this expected, brown-rumped American race.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – These widespread shorebirds breed in the Arctic and winter all around the world's coastlines, including inside the restaurant at Blue Waters Inn!

**STILT SANDPIPER** (*Calidris himantopus*) – Ten were with other shorebirds at Millennium on Trinidad.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – Three were at Millennium with other shorebirds.

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) – We saw about 20 Semipalmated Sandpipers mixed in with hundreds of Western Sandpipers at Orange Valley.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – The bulk of the peep flock at Orange Valley was this long-billed species.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – Good numbers of this familiar tail-bobber, especially at Caroni Swamp and Bon Accord.

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*) – Two were in the ditches at the Aripo Livestock Station.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – These lanky sandpipers were seen regularly in freshwater contexts on both islands.

**WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – A few dozen were on the flats on Trinidad's western coastline.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – The best view was at the Bon Accord ponds.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Quite common along the western shore of Trinidad.

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – The immature bird that we found on New Year's Day on the previous tour was still at Carli Bay. This species is quite rare this far south in the Caribbean.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (GRAELLSII)** (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) – We found at least two adult individuals during our birding on the western coast of Trinidad.

**LARGE-BILLED TERN** (*Phaetusa simplex*) – The one in the Caroni rice fields on our final evening on Trinidad was a very nice treat - a visitor from mainland South America.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – These large terns were with the gull and skimmer flocks along the western shore of Trinidad.

**BLACK SKIMMER (CINERASCENS)** (*Rynchops niger cinerascens*) – These accompanied the gull and tern flocks near Orange Valley in western Trinidad.

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds).

**RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD** (*Phaethon aethereus*) – Our visit to Little Tobago Island highlighted this spectacular seabird. We were entranced by their circuits over the island's forests and their desperate escape flights away from marauding frigatebirds, but it was especially exciting to see the bird up close at its nest.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels).

**AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER** (*Puffinus lherminieri*) – On Little Tobago Island, we were very lucky to watch an adult on a relatively exposed nest under an overhang. These small tubenoses are usually out of sight in underground burrows during the day during the nesting season, so this was a rare treat. [N]

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds).

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) – These giant sea pirates sailed around the coasts of both islands, but it was most exciting to watch them chasing and stealing fish from tropicbirds from our vantage atop Little Tobago Island.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets).

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*) – These slim seabirds were nesting below us at Little Tobago Island, but they were outnumbered by Red-footed Boobies there. Zolani and Zud also maneuvered the boat up to one that was sitting in a waterside tree on the island.

**RED-FOOTED BOOBY** (*Sula sula*) – Our viewing of these nesting seabirds at Little Tobago was pretty great. We were able to appreciate the different color morphs and even saw plenty of fuzzy white chicks in the tree nests. Smaller and slimmer than Brown Booby.

Anhingidae (Anhingas).

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) – We saw these snakebirds near the southwest end of Tobago in freshwater wetlands.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags).

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – We found small numbers on both islands.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans).

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – There were 335 on the spit at Carli Bay - quite a lot for here!

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns).

**PINNATED BITTERN** (*Botaurus pinnatus*) – This cryptic heron was an excellent sighting in the tall marsh at Nariva Swamp. Even with the bird dead center in the telescope, it was a bit hard to pick out until you got your eye "in."

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Common.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – This rare species put in a good showing on this tour. We saw one at Millennium, and another TWO lined up on the fence at the Bon Accord ponds where we got to compare them to Snowy and Cattle egrets at our leisure. This Eurasian species breeds in small numbers in Barbados and is an occasional visitor to T&T, though 3 in one trip here is quite good.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Common.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Dozens were along the western shore of Trinidad, including flying in to Caroni Swamp in the evening.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – About 200 arrived to roost in Caroni Swamp during our evening vigil from the boat.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Common on both islands.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – This is the common *Butorides* heron on Tobago, and we saw plenty. There's a bit of a hybrid zone here, and one of the adults we saw showed some gray on the neck that was clearly influence from Striated Heron.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – This is the common *Butorides* heron on Trinidad.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – We saw one roosting overhead at Millennium.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – These crab-eaters were at Orange Valley, Caroni, and the Tobago Plantations, where they were setting up nests in the mangroves.

**BOAT-BILLED HERON** (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – One of these goofy nocturnal herons was on its well-hidden day roost in the Caroni Swamp.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills).

**SCARLET IBIS** (*Eudocimus ruber*) – This species is a major draw for many birders considering a trip to Trinidad, and with good reason - the evening roost flight is one of the great bird spectacles of the world. About 6500 of these magnificent red waders flew in to roost in Caroni Swamp during our evening boat trip. We even enjoyed some ibis-colored rum punch and tea cakes as we experienced the flight. More were streaming in as we headed back to the dock.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures).

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Very common on Trinidad.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Common on Trinidad.

Pandionidae (Osprey).

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Plenty of these fish hawks were spotted on both islands, both in freshwater and coastal habitats.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites).

**PEARL KITE** (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) – Mahase's sharp eyes spotted an adult hunkered on a stick nest at Mexico Road in Trinidad's lowlands. Using the scope we were able to get some nice views of this small raptor. [N]

**BLACK HAWK-EAGLE** (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – This scarce, striking raptor gave us a few opportunities to enjoy its presence in the sky above AWNC. They almost always whistle as they circle over, which is a good tip-off that one is in the area.

**LONG-WINGED HARRIER** (*Circus buffoni*) – Initially quite distant, but we had a good close flyby on our second visit to the Caroni rice overlook (and we nabbed that Large-billed Tern, too!).

**COMMON BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – This is the black hawk that is common on Trinidad, including at AWNC.

**SAVANNA HAWK** (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) – This long-legged raptor with a short tail was seen in the open pasturelands of lowland Trinidad.

**GREAT BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) – We heard a young bird whistling at Gilpin Trace, but weren't able to spot it through the canopy. [\*]



**WHITE HAWK** (*Pseudastur albicollis*) – These broad, high contrast raptors soared overhead several times at AWNC and elsewhere in the Arima Valley.

**GRAY-LINED HAWK** (*Buteo nitidus*) – This South American replacement of Gray Hawk showed nicely in the savannah lowlands of Trinidad.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – We saw one of these small Buteo hawks on Trinidad, and a few more soared over on Tobago, too.

**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – This hawk was fairly common overhead during our stay on Trinidad. Those curled-up outer primaries help give away the ID at great distance when the bird is soaring.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – We had great luck with this snazzy blackish raptor, especially in the airspace over AWNC. This one looks a bit like Turkey Vulture and even rocks back and forth a bit when it soars.

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops choliba*) – During our boat trip at Caroni Swamp, Lester showed us two day-roosting pairs of these small owls.

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – We heard these tiny owls several times and had a good look at one in the bamboo at AWNC.

#### Trogonidae (Trogons)

**GREEN-BACKED TROGON** (*Trogon viridis*) – Trinidad's biggest trogon - ours were at AWNC and on the Blanchisseuse Road.

**GUIANAN TROGON** (*Trogon violaceus*) – This is the smaller yellow-bellied trogon on Trinidad. Great looks at AWNC - right in the upper car park a few times!

**COLLARED TROGON** (*Trogon collaris*) – This is the only red-bellied trogon in the country, and it is also the only trogon found on both major islands. We saw five in one day on the Blanchisseuse Road on Trinidad.

#### Momotidae (Motmots)

**TRINIDAD MOTMOT** (*Momotus bahamensis*) – Our first took a lot of effort to find on Trinidad, and we just heard that one - fortunately we found about 15 over on Tobago, where they are remarkably easy to see on the Main Ridge. [E]

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle torquata*) – These huge kingfishers were at the Nariva River Mouth (one raucous flyby) and Millennium, too.

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – One flew by calling at the Bon Accord ponds.

**AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – Wow - it took a bit of poking around in the mangroves, but we eventually got to see this tiny terror in the scope near the mouth of the Nariva River. Excellent!

**GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*) – During our Pygmy Kingfisher search, this slightly larger kingfisher flew up and perched along the canal near the Nariva River mouth, giving us a decent scope view for a few minutes.

#### Galbulidae (Jacamars)

**RUFIOUS-TAILED JACAMAR** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – Found in places with exposed soil banks (for nesting), we watched these sit-and-wait predators on both islands.

#### Ramphastidae (Toucans)

**CHANNEL-BILLED TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) – Often tough to see up close here, but we managed some views near the crest of the Northern Range and also at AWNC.

#### Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) – The common woodpecker of Tobago.

**CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) – Wow - Brandon spotted one from the back of the van as we zipped through a coconut palm grove near Nariva. It stayed put until we bailed out of the van for some nice views - a living relative of the Ivorybill!

**LINEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – We saw this common large woodpecker several times around AWNC, often right from the veranda.

**CHESTNUT WOODPECKER** (*Celeus elegans*) – It was really challenging to see, but a few folks pulled off some views in the mature forest along the Blanchisseuse Road.

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – We enjoyed occasional sightings at AWNC and on the Blanchisseuse Road while we searched for the Chestnut Woodpecker.

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – Two flew by distantly at the Caroni Rice Project; another immature was associating with Yellow-headed Caracaras at Carli Bay.

**YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA** (*Milvago chimachima*) – A fairly common raptor in lowland Trinidad; we also saw a couple around the Blue Waters Inn on Tobago.

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – Three widely spaced sightings, including one that perched up nicely in Brasso Seco near the oropendola/ cacique colony.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – Multiple sightings, but by far the most memorable was the dark immature bird that was hunting the bird flocks at Bon Accord - we saw it chasing White-cheeked Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, and it even dove at one of the rare Little Egrets! It peeled off before making a kill.

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

**BLUE-HEADED PARROT** (*Pionus menstruus*) – Mahase knows just where to wait for Blue-headed Parrots to appear at Morne Lacroix, and sure enough - they came in and sat right in front of us!

**ORANGE-WINGED PARROT** (*Amazona amazonica*) – This is the common large parrot on both islands.

**GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET** (*Forpus passerinus*) – Our most memorable sightings of these tiny parrots were around the Aripo Livestock Station.

#### Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

**GREAT ANTSHRIKE** (*Taraba major*) – Most folks caught up to this red-eyed skulker from the AWNC veranda, but it can be a tough one to see well out in the open.

**BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE** (*Sakesphorus canadensis*) – We had an excellent show from this antshrike with the expressive crest in the mangroves - male and female appeared and hopped around on mangrove knees so we could appreciate every angle.

**BARRED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – A common antbird here - quite easy to see while holding a cup of coffee on the AWNC veranda most mornings!

**PLAIN ANTVIREO** (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) – One showed up briefly at Gilpin Trace in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve.

**WHITE-FLANKED ANTWREN** (*Myrmotherula axillaris*) – About four zipped across the Blanchisseuse Road in front of us, follow-the-leader style, but they were tough to see well.

**WHITE-FRINGED ANTWREN** (*Formicivora grisea*) – This small antbird was pretty easy to see well on Tobago - we even had a few on the grounds of our hotel.

**WHITE-BELLIED ANTbird** (*Myrmeciza longipes*) – Wow - this was really spectacular. Normally this antbird is either heard only or just seen briefly here, but we had one perch beautifully on logs in the open understory at AWNC a few times. Yip yip!

#### *Formicariidae (Antthrushes)*

**BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH** (*Formicarius analis*) – Mostly a heard only - one that we tried to whistle in approached and then flew across a small gap, but it was tough to see well.

#### *Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)*

**GRAY-THROATED LEAFTOSSER** (*Sclerurus albicularis*) – We heard this ovenbird in the forest at AWNC, but couldn't spot it this time. [\*]

**OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER** (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – Heard at Gilpin Trace on Tobago. [\*]

**COCOA WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – This medium woodcreeper with the stocky bill was on both islands, but our best views were certainly on Tobago - the eye-level bird at Bon Accord was pretty special.

**STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendroplex picus*) – On Trinidad, this one is best sought in the mangroves along the western coast - we found several during our Caroni Swamp excursion. They habitually hunt small crabs there.

**STREAKED XENOPS** (*Xenops rutilans*) – We found this small, piculet-like ovenbird a few times in the midstory in the lower Arima Valley - a special treat to see it so well.

**YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL** (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – This ovenbird of open, scrubby grassland was at the Aripo Livestock Station and a few other Trinidad sites.

**PALE-BREASTED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis albescentis*) – Though we heard it well near Aripo, we mostly saw rusty blurs as they flew between clumps of bushes. A few saw it stationary.

**STRIPE-BREASTED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis cinnamomea*) – "Keep going!" - this one says. So we did, and we ended up finding one attending its ridiculously oversized nest, a woven structure hanging from vines in the forest understory.

#### *Pipridae (Manakins)*

**BLUE-BACKED MANAKIN** (*Chiroxiphia pareola*) – Excellent - we were entertained by at least six individuals on the Tobago Main Ridge, and we got to see a bit of the famous courtship display, too!

**WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN** (*Manacus manacus*) – These tiny forest gnomes were displaying with smacks and wing whirs in the forest understory at AWNC.

**GOLDEN-HEADED MANAKIN** (*Ceratopipra erythrocephala*) – Though we didn't see them dancing, there was a very nice fruiting fig tree at AWNC that attracted over 5 individuals on several occasions.

#### *Cotingidae (Cotingas)*

**BEARDED BELLBIRD** (*Procnias averano*) – One of the iconic birds of Trinidad and AWNC, and quite often the first cotinga for travelers new to the Neotropics. We dedicated a hike on the Discovery Trail to watching singing (I might opt for a different word next time to describe the loud noise a bellbird makes, but the ink is already dry here) males and their obscene, droopy facial wattles. Amazing! A relative, the White Bellbird of northern South America, has recently been crowned the loudest bird in the world, but this species can't be too far behind in terms of sound output.

#### *Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)*

**BLACK-TAILED TITYRA** (*Tityra cayana*) – One perched up in the "bellbird tree" visible from the AWNC veranda on two consecutive mornings.

#### *Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**WHITE-THROATED SPADEBILL** (*Platyrinchus mystaceus*) – It was hard to spot in the dark forest, but this tiny flycatcher sure put smiles on our faces on Gilpin Trace on Tobago.

**OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – Though in the field guides this looks like another drab flycatcher, it's actually quite distinctive with the pale bill base, nervous wing-flipping action, and habit of gleaning fruit. We saw them a few times on Trinidad.

**YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias flaviventris*) – We heard this bird many times (so many!) before we laid eyes on it on Tobago.

**SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – This mournful whistler was a regular part of the morning chorus at AWNC. [\*]

**FOREST ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) – One attended the fruiting fig at AWNC with many other songbirds.

**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – A fairly common and vociferous flycatcher, especially in scrubby edge habitat on Tobago.

**BRAN-COLORED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) – Two were low in scrubby open habitat at Waller Field.

**EULER'S FLYCATCHER** (*Lathrotriccus euleri*) – Two were along the side of the road near where we saw the Streaked Xenops in the lower Arima Valley. We had to peer carefully into the undergrowth to spot them.

**TROPICAL PEWEE** (*Contopus cinereus*) – Two were flycatching along the Blanchisseuse Road - that tail shiver that they do when they land helps give them away as Contopus pewees.

**FUSCOUS FLYCATCHER** (*Cnemotriccus fuscatus*) – We found two in the forest of the Main Ridge on Tobago.

**PIED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola pica*) – Fairly common along the edge of fresh water - especially at Nariva Swamp and Orange Grove/ Blue Waters, on Trinidad.

**WHITE-HEADED MARSH TYRANT** (*Arundinicola leucocephala*) – This attractive flycatcher was at the edge of wetlands and fields in lowland Trinidad.

**BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – Though we heard its very loud whistles regularly, it was challenging to see - until one perched out at the edge of the clearing near the fruiting fig tree at AWCN.

**VENEZUELAN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus venezuelensis*) – Best identified by the whistled call, we heard this slender *Myiarchus* in the Main Ridge of Tobago.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – This stout *Myiarchus* with the big bill was common at forest edges on Tobago.

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – A common and conspicuous flycatcher on Trinidad.

**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – The strange-looking "kiskadee" with the funny voice! We had some nice looks right around the main house at AWCN.

**STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – These migrant flycatchers were at AWCN and in the Main Ridge of Tobago.

**PIRATIC FLYCATCHER** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – Our best views were of two individuals near a cacique colony at Morne Lacroix in northern Trinidad.

**SULPHURY FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannopsis sulphurea*) – These Mauritania palm specialists with the scratchy voices were in the palm swamps of Waller Field.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Common and widespread.

**GRAY KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Our studies of this large-headed kingbird were on Tobago.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis).*

**RUFIOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE (NORTHERN)** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis flavipectus*) – A persistent voice on Trinidad - we ended up with some great views in the Caroni Swamp mangroves.

**SCRUB GREENLET (TOBAGO)** (*Hylophilus flavipes insularis*) – This small vireo is a common resident of Tobago. Isolated from other populations of Scrub Greenlet and with a different voice, some folks think this is a candidate for full species status.

**GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET** (*Pachysylvia aurantiifrons saturata*) – A fairly plain, small vireo that we found in mixed flocks in Trinidad on a few occasions. Heard far more often than seen.

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Surprise! This familiar bird from Eastern North America is very rare in Trinidad & Tobago. The one we studied and documented in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve was only the second modern record for Tobago.

**CHIVI VIREO** (*Vireo chivi*) – We heard these migrants singing in the forests of Tobago, and had some really nice views on the steps at Little Tobago and in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve. Recently split from Red-eyed Vireo.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows).*

**SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – These pale-rumped lopers were often in pairs and small groups near nesting holes on Trinidad.

**CARIBBEAN MARTIN** (*Progne dominicensis*) – Excellent studies over the Bon Accord ponds. They usually arrive (from the mainland, presumably) between our New Year's tour and the February tour.

**GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*) – This is the common large swallow on Trinidad.

**WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta albiventer*) – Like a nicely marked Tree Swallow, this *Tachycineta* nests in cavities and is found along the edge of water (now on both islands).

*Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers).*

**LONG-BILLED GNATWREN** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – Remember this one? One singing bird dropped down in a vine tangle in response to playback in the lower Arima Valley for a spectacular view.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens).*

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Common on both islands.

**RUFIOUS-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius rutilus rutilus*) – This is the Trinidad form. We heard their cheery songs regularly from the forest, but only had a couple of chances at good views. One was right above the Stripe-breasted Spintail nest that we found along the Blanchisseuse Road.

**RUFIOUS-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius rutilus tobagensis*) – The Tobago subspecies showed off in the streambed along Gilpin Trace.

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers).*

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus gilvus*) – Common and widespread, especially near people.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies).*

**COCOA THRUSH** (*Turdus fumigatus*) – Our top views were near the upper part of the Discovery Trail where they like to nest.

**YELLOW-LEGGED THRUSH** (*Turdus flavipes xanthoscelus*) – We heard this one singing on the Blanchisseuse Road, but couldn't find one on Tobago. [\*]

**WHITE-NECKED THRUSH (GRAY-FLANKED)** (*Turdus albicollis phaeopygoides*) – Several sightings of these retiring thrushes on the forest trails at AWCN.

**SPECTACLED THRUSH** (*Turdus nudigenis*) – A common visitor to the fruit tables at AWCN - this is the one with the scrambled egg around its eye.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies).*

**TRINIDAD EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia trinitatis*) – In the Lower Arima Valley, we made some special stops to look for this local species. It likes to perch high in stands of introduced bamboo to sing.

**VIOLACEOUS EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia violacea*) – Very common in forests, and great views at arm's length from the veranda at AWCN.

*Icteridae (Troupials and Allies).*

**RED-BREASTED MEADOWLARK** (*Leistes militaris*) – These strange meadowlarks sang and did their short flight displays at Aripo Livestock Station. Formerly called "Red-breasted Blackbird."

**CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – This loud songster rocks forward as he sings and then swings back upright. We got to see their colonies in action at several locations.

**YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE** (*Cacicus cela*) – Like mini oropendolas, these fine vocalists were working on their colonies at places like Brasso Seco in Trinidad.

**EPAULET ORIOLE (MORICHE)** (*Icterus cayanensis chryscephalus*) – Frustrating! We heard this one singing and calling quietly, but only managed brief flight views in the Mauritia palm swamp at Waller Field.

**YELLOW ORIOLE** (*Icterus nigrogularis*) – The finest views were near Mahase's home at Temple Village.

**SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Want a cowbird? Find the... buffalypso! We saw them hanging around the paddocks at Aripo Livestock Station.

**GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – Well-known as nest parasites of Crested Oropendolas, we saw one getting chased out of the colony tree by some angry oropendolas.

**CARIB GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus lugubris*) – Common in lowlands near people.

**YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD** (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) – Great views at Nariva Swamp near the Pinnated Bittern.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Most common in forested wetlands like Caroni Swamp.

**MASKED YELLOWTHROAT (MASKED)** (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis aequinoctialis*) – The individual on Mexico Road sang and sat up for scope views.

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Just a couple of wintering birds (fewer than I usually see here).

**TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitayumi*) – This small warbler was near the fruiting fig tree at AWNC.

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Relatively common in the lowlands.

*Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)*

**MASKED CARDINAL** (*Paroaria nigrogenis*) – Lester showed us a bird that liked to eat biscuits along the canal at Caroni Swamp - a stunning tanager that is fairly scarce now on the island.

**WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus luctuosus flaviventris*) – Leslee and others saw this one from the veranda at AWNC where it is uncommon.

**WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – A common visitor to fruit at AWNC - the black males and rusty females are quite different!

**SILVER-BEAKED TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus carbo magnirostris*) – One of the first loud songbird voices we'd hear in the dawn chorus each morning at AWNC - and they were seen regularly at the feeders, too.

**BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (BLUE-GRAY)** (*Thraupis episcopus nesophila*) – Common on Trinidad.

**BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (BLUE-GRAY)** (*Thraupis episcopus berlepschi*) – Slightly brighter blue - found on Tobago.

**PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Another common and widespread tanager.

**SPECKLED TANAGER** (*Ixothraupis guttata*) – Three were in the big Trema tree that was almost done fruiting on the Blanchisseuse Road.

**TURQUOISE TANAGER** (*Tangara mexicana*) – Quite easily seen this time, which is not always the case. I remember the birds down low at Waller Field and some nice ones above us in the AWNC fruiting fig.

**BAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara gyrola*) – Another relatively common frugivore in the forests of Trinidad, but not at feeders - just in the canopy.

**BLUE DACNIS** (*Dacnis cayana*) – These small tanagers showed up a few times on Trinidad.

**PURPLE HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) – Incredible! The ones at AWNC are up close and personal, all day long.

**RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – The small flock at the Main Ridge visitor center stuck around for a minute or two, but we never had this species sit still for a long view - actually pretty typical.

**GREEN HONEYCREEPER** (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – This honeycreeper attends the feeders at AWNC in smaller numbers than Purple Honeycreeper.

**BICOLORED CONEBILL** (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – On Trinidad, this species is more or less restricted to mangroves, and we found it near the Nariva River mouth and on the west coast of the island, too.

**SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*) – Common around Carli Bay.

**GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH** (*Sicalis luteola*) – Two showed nicely at Aripo Livestock Station. This species was first documented for Trinidad during a Field Guides tour led by Megan Crewe and Mahase Ramlal.

**BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Johnny Jump-up. This exuberant, tiny tanager performed its short flight songs for us on many occasions in the lowlands.

**BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – Ubiquitous and responsible for many sounds that make birders ask, "What was that?!"

**BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Melanospiza bicolor*) – These were common in grassy margins and forest edge on Tobago.

**GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – Seen well in the mixed flock in the lower Arima Valley where we found the Trinidad Euphonias.

## MAMMALS

**PALLAS'S LONG-TONGUED BAT** (*Glossophaga soricina*) – This nectar bat attends the feeders at AWNC each night.

**MILLER'S LONG-TONGUED BAT** (*Glossophaga longirostris*) – They were in the house at Little Tobago Island.

**WHITE-LINED SAC-WINGED BAT SP.** (*Saccopteryx* sp.) – Not sure if these were Lesser or Greater, but we saw plenty of them, including eating fruit at AWNC.

**COMMON TENT-MAKING BAT** (*Uroderma bilobatum*) – A couple came out of a tent roost (these bats habitually cut the ribs of palm fronds to create their shelters) at Waller Field.

**RED-TAILED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus granatensis*) – These small squirrels were on Tobago.

**RED-RUMPED AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta agouti*) – They were regularly seen cleaning up fruit scraps at AWNC, and also in the yard at Blue Waters Inn.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Some of the other animals we encountered along the way:



Green Iguana

Giant Ameiva

Golden Tegu

Tropical House Gecko

Eyespot Gecko

Anole sp.

Cook's Tree Boa

Fer-de-lance

Tobago Racer

Spectacled Caiman

Cane Toad

Trinidad Stream Frog

Mangrove Tree Crab

Fiddler Crab sp.

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**Totals for the tour: 221 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa**