

PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

TRINIDAD and TOBAGO

6 – 22 March 2010

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: Chris Doughty and Martyn Kenefick

It was an El Nino year in Trinidad and Tobago and even though we had deliberately timed the tour to coincide with the middle of the dry season, we had not expected to arrive in the middle of one of the most prolonged droughts on record. The islands had gone a whole 5 months without any substantial rain falling. This made it very pleasant for us underfoot, with no muddy trails to walk, as the drought continued during our 2 weeks on the islands. This also had the added bonus of no birding time lost to prolonged rainy periods. Our tour was a great success; we amassed a more than respectable total of 217 species of birds seen on the tour. One of the great things about Trinidad and Tobago is that it is an excellent introduction to the birds of South America, as we observed representatives of almost all the Neotropical bird families. Specific highlights of the tour included superb views of the endemic and critically endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan, the awe-inspiring spectacle of hundreds of breeding seabirds around Little Tobago Island, spectacular views of hundreds of gorgeous Scarlet Ibis coming into roost for the night, an amazing 18 different species of raptors, observed the spectacular display flight of the endangered Ornate Hawk-Eagle, an unforgettable encounter with a breeding colony of prehistoric looking Oilbirds, a staggering 12 species of brightly coloured hummingbirds, with most of them observed from just a few metres away and the deafening sounds of calling Bearded Bellbirds, which must surely be one of the most spectacular birds in the world. Sightings of vagrant birds always adds spice to any tour and we saw a staggering number of 9 vagrants on this tour; Purple Heron, Ring-necked Duck, Ring-billed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Black-whiskered Vireo and Magnolia, Blackpoll and Black-and-white Warblers. The following long list of birds seen on the tour would not have been possible without the exceptional talent and skill of our local guide Martyn Kenefick and Peregrine Bird Tours policy, of using local birding guides, wherever possible.

We began the tour in Port of Spain, the capital city of Trinidad; from here we drove to the world famous Asa Wright Nature Centre in the Arima Valley. Birds along the roadside during the drive included small flocks of Cattle Egrets, hundreds of circling Black Vultures, a fine looking Savanna Hawk, flocks of Feral Pigeons, plenty of Ruddy Ground-Doves, one or two flocks of Smooth-billed Anis, several Great Kiskadees perched on roadside wires, along with lots of Tropical Kingbirds, a few Shiny Cowbirds and Carib Grackles where literally everywhere.

On our arrival at the Asa Wright Nature Centre we positioned ourselves on its world famous veranda, where we enjoyed a veritable smorgasbord of neotropical species in an

idyllic setting looking out over a delightful forested valley. There was so much bird activity at the feeders that we spent many hours on the veranda over the course of the next five days and it proved to be extremely rewarding. There was always a feeding frenzy right before our eyes, with a bewildering array of birds on view at any one time. The feeders attracted literally hundreds of Bananaquits, so much so that they would frequently obliterate the feeder that they were on. Next in abundance were the ubiquitous Palm Tanagers followed by lots of Blue-grey, Silver-beaked and White-lined Tanagers. However, in terms of colour none of these could compare to the stunning Green Honeycreepers and Purple Honeycreepers which were constantly in view. A few Grey-fronted Doves, normally shy forest dwellers, could always be seen at the feeders along with spectacular Trinidad Motmots. There was always dozens of brightly coloured Crested Oropendolas with lots of noisy squabbles breaking out among them. Bare-eyed and Cocoa Thrushes fed on the ground under the feeders, competing for fallen scraps with several family parties of Red-rumped Agoutis, an animal which is quite scarce elsewhere in Trinidad, as it is the favourite food of local hunters. On a couple of mornings a very large species of rodent was also observed feeding on scraps underneath the feeders, this was a Climbing Rat. Perhaps the most surprising visitors to the feeders were the beautifully plumaged Great and Barred Antshrikes, which fed on the ground under the feeders. Dozens of hummingbirds buzzed actively around the sugar feeders, often coming to within inches of our faces. The most numerous among them were Blue-chinned Sapphires, White-chested Emeralds and Copper-rumped Hummingbirds but the most pugnacious were the beautiful White-necked Jacobins which tried to keep all the other hummingbirds at bay. Occasionally, Green and Rufous-breasted Hermits showed up at the feeders, but the Black-throated Mangos and a tiny female Tufted Coquette preferred the flowers which were growing in profusion directly in front of the veranda. Looking out from the veranda we enjoyed fabulous views of lots of other species which included Turkey Vulture, a splendid circling White Hawk, a stunning Common Black Hawk, large flocks of Blue-headed and Orange-winged Parrots, Channel-billed Toucans were not uncommon and we enjoyed both male and female Lineated Woodpeckers. A couple of Tremor trees adjacent to the veranda often hosted Forest Elaenia, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Black-tailed Tityra, Southern Roughwing, Tropical Mockingbird, Bay-headed Tanager, Blue Dacnis, Grayish Saltator and lots of Violaceous Euphonias.

Reluctantly dragging ourselves away from the feeders, we walked one of the many forest trails in search of the beautiful, but very scarce Bearded Bellbird. The birds were easy to hear, but seeing them was a different matter! Eventually, we enjoyed great scope views of a nearby calling male, it is a very bizarre and spectacularly plumaged bird. Little wonder, it was voted bird of the tour, by tour participants. Other birds observed while walking to and from the Bellbird site, included Fork-tailed Palm Swift, a stunning male White-tailed Trogon, an acrobatic Streaked Xenops, a pair of delightful White-flanked Antwrens, superbly plumaged White-bearded Manakins, Golden-fronted Greenlet, White-necked Thrush and splendid Turquoise Tanagers. However, pride of place must go to a Common Potoo, which sat at its daytime roost affording us great scope views of it. There was also a rather surprise find of a Black-whiskered Vireo, which is a very scarce winter visitor to Trinidad.

A pre breakfast birding session from the verandah at Asa Wright produced perched Scaled Pigeons, which we were able to enjoy in the scope, as well as a splendid Squirrel Cuckoo. A spot of birding around the carpark, before boarded our bus, produced two splendid additions to our ever growing bird list; a pair of beautiful Red-legged Honeycreepers and a superb Yellow Oriole. We then drove to the Aripo Agricultural Research Station an extensive area of lowland savanna and a tiny amount of wetlands. Here we found our only Cocoi Heron of the tour, a beautiful Peregrine Falcon, several Southern Lapwings, a single Lesser Yellowlegs, several Solitary Sandpipers and a single Least Sandpiper. There were good numbers of Wattled Jacanas, a delightful flock of Green-rumped Parrotlets, several Yellow-chinned Spinetails, together with very attractive Pied Water-Tyrants and equally attractive White-headed Marsh-Tyrants. We also enjoyed watching a few very beautiful White-winged Swallows, Gray-breasted Martins, a small flock of Blue-black Grassquits and several splendid Red-breasted Blackbirds. At a forested area close to the research centre, new birds included the diminutive Little Hermit, the splendid Black-crested Antshrike, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, good looks at the uncommon Piratic Flycatcher, good looks at the very attractive Rufous-breasted Wren and Yellow Warbler.

Continuing our drive we birded along the Manzanilla Beach Road and its purported one million coconut trees. Along the coast we found large flocks of Brown Pelicans and Magnificent Frigatebirds cruised overhead. Scanning the many coconut trees produced Plumbeous Kite, Yellow-headed Caracara, a stunning Crimson-crested Woodpecker and a Brown-crested Flycatcher. In a large area of mangroves along the Nariva River we found Striated Heron and enjoyed good looks at a solitary Red-rumped Woodpecker. Pressing on we reached the Nariva Swamp, which unfortunately was almost bone dry, due to the prolonged drought. Even so, we managed to find a few very striking Yellow-hooded Blackbirds and a single Giant Cowbird.

The following day was spent birding along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the heavily forested uplands of the Northern Range. Frequent birding stops produced both Band-rumped and Gray-rumped Swifts, Violaceous and Collared Trogons showed superbly well, as did Golden-olive Woodpecker, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, the very uncommon Euler's Flycatcher, (Sheila's nemesis), Tropical Pewee and a Golden-headed Manakin lek held our attention for a while. Dennis and Sue glimpsed a Stripe-breasted Spinetail and we all saw Southern House Wren, brilliantly plumaged Speckled Tanagers, American Redstart and several confiding Golden-crowned Warblers. An unexpected find this morning was a magnificent male Black-and-white Warbler, in full breeding plumage, which is a rare winter visitor to Trinidad. We also observed our first sighting of Trinidad's only species of Squirrel, the Red-tailed Squirrel. Trinidad's only daytime flying bat, the Greater White-lined Bat, was also seen well this morning. We enjoyed our warm packed lunch in a wonderful bus shelter! However, the bus shelter was slightly overshadowed by a splendid Ornate Hawk-Eagle soaring above the forest, right above the bus shelter; this is a rare species anywhere in the Americas. What a stakeout, you've got to hand it to Martyn, he really knows where to pick his lunch sites! We drove to a lower altitude, to observe a Yellow-rumped Cacique nesting colony, which we all enjoyed and while here we also added our first Rufous-tailed Jacamar.

We spent the following morning birding in the South Oropuche Swamp, which produced a host of new birds for us. Here we saw Blue-winged Teal, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons, Snowy Egret, Osprey, the uncommon Long-winged Harrier, enjoyed scope views of a perched Gray Hawk, lots of Common Moorhens, a few Purple Gallinules, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, an unusually obliging Little Cuckoo, Ruby Topaz Hummingbird, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, the illusive Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, Gray Kingbird, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, flocks of Barn Swallows, the secretive Bicolored Conebill, the stunning Red-capped Cardinal and the furtive Masked Yellowthroat. The introduced Small Indian Mongoose also ran across the track in front of us during our morning walk.

In the afternoon, a couple of birding stops along the Gulf of Paria, netted Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Scarlet Ibis, Semipalmated Plover, Whimbrel, Willet, Yellow-billed, Large-billed and Royal Terns and good numbers of stunning Black Skimmers. Whilst scanning a high tide roost of hundreds of Laughing Gulls we picked out two Ring-billed Gulls and two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, both rare winter visitors to Trinidad. On our return to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, a little birding in front of the verandah produced a stunning Gray-headed Kite circling above the valley and great looks at the uncommon Boat-billed Flycatcher.

The following morning we made the obligatory pilgrimage down to Dunstan Cave which harbours a large and relatively accessible Oilbird colony. We all enjoyed watching some very close, but rather prehistoric looking birds and listening to their strange rasping calls in the gloom at the entrance of the cave. This was without doubt one of the great highlights of the tour and a new family for all tour participants. While walking to and from Dunstan Cave, new birds included Streaked Flycatcher, Red-crowned Ant-Tanager and the surprise find of an Olive-sided Flycatcher, a very uncommon winter visitor to Trinidad.

In the afternoon we headed to the famous Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary, now a designated Ramsar Site, of international importance. We boarded our boat which took us through extensive mangroves to a large Scarlet Ibis roost. Seeing hundreds of these bright red birds coming in and contrasting with the dark green mangroves as we sipped rum punch was a truly thrilling experience. However, Scarlet Ibis were not the only birds in the mangroves, new birds here included a soaring Short-tailed Hawk, fly-by Eared Doves, Greater Ani, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher and best of all, a perched male Green-throated Mango, which is mainly confined to Northeastern Brazil. Great spotting by our boat driver produced two sleeping Silky Anteaters, which looked like round balls of fur. As we drove back to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, a Barn Owl flew across the road, in front of the bus.

Sadly, it was time to leave the Asa Wright Nature Centre, we had very much enjoyed our five days here, but it was now time to search for Trinidad and Tobago's only endemic bird, the Trinidad Piping-Guan. We broke the long drive to Grand Riviere, with a birding stop on the coast at Galera Point. Close to this area we observed two new species of

raptors flying along the roadside, these were the very beautiful Swallow-tailed Kite and the Broad-winged Hawk. Following lunch at Grand Riviere we decided to walk up the hill, where we would look for the Trinidad Piping Guan, the following morning. We did not expect to find a lot of birds in the heat of the afternoon, however, the birding was better than we expected and we added three new species to our list. We observed the Plain-brown Woodcreeper very well, taped in a superb Silvered Antbird and saw a beautiful Tropical Parula.

We were up bright and early the following morning and off in search of Trinidad's only endemic bird, the very rare Trinidad Piping-Guan. As the sun slowly began to rise we were in position at one of their favourite feeding sites and waited for them to put in an appearance. Unfortunately, they were a no-show! Fortunately, we still had the following morning up our sleeve, so we headed back for a late breakfast, followed by a mid-day siesta. In the late afternoon some of us did some birding back up the hill and were rewarded with superb looks at a soaring Zone-tailed Hawk, we were extremely fortunate to find a very close and unusually co-operative White-bellied Antbird and we also had a responsive Pale-breasted Spinetail and good looks at a pair of Trinidad Euphonias.

Not taking any chances on the second morning, we were in position at their favourite feeding site, a little before dawn, as we eagerly awaited their appearance. In the darkness, we could hear them calling in nearby trees and we prayed that they would stay long enough for us to see them well. As the light slowly improved we enjoyed the spectacle of no less than 7 feeding birds, at very close quarters and we were even able to enjoy tremendous scope views of this marvelous bird in full view, feeding in the tops of the nearby trees. It was a great relief to see them so well and well worth the early morning start. On our way back down the hill we were able to enjoy close looks at a cooperative tiny Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet.

It was now time to take the short flight across to Tobago which, rather curiously, is home to a number of South American species not found in Trinidad despite the fact that the latter lies much closer to mainland Venezuela. Following our arrival at the airport, we drove to Speyside, at the northern end of the island. While driving along Dennis looked up a small stream that we were crossing and he noticed a Black-necked Stilt, which we had not seen previously on the tour. On our arrival at the hotel, all we had time for was a little birding in the grounds of our hotel. Here we enjoyed good looks at Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Pale-vented Pigeon and unusually tame White-tipped Doves. That evening, as we gathered in the bar to do the birdlist, we were rather surprised to find a small number of Ruddy Turnstones walking on top of the dining tables looking for scraps of food! None of us had ever seen Ruddy Turnstones behaving in this manner and it came as a great surprise to us, albeit, a very pleasant one. While having dinner, a large species of bat was observed flying around the dining room and just outside the dining room there were a couple of hummingbird feeders and large numbers of bats were observed feeding from them after dinner. These bats were Greater Spear-nosed Bats and we enjoyed watching them flying around.

The following day was spent walking the Glipin Trace, in the rainforest along Tobago's high central ridge. Our main objective here was to find the rare and localised White-tailed Sabrewing, which only occurs on the top of this mountain range and two other small mountains on the Paria Peninsula, in Venezuela. We were very fortunate to locate a superb male perched low in a tree, which enabled us to enjoy prolonged views of this rare species. We also saw the Olivaceous Woodcreeper very well and both male and female Plain Antvireos foraging in the canopy. A pair of White-fringed Antwrens was also enjoyed by all and we also saw two rather plain, but range-restricted species of flycatchers very well; the Fuscous and the Venezuelan. Dennis then pointed out a small species of warbler and Martyn became very excited, as it proved to be a beautiful male Magnolia Warbler, in full breeding plumage, which is an extremely rare vagrant to Trinidad and Tobago. Well done Dennis! The other main target bird today was the very beautiful Blue-backed Manakin; we were not to be disappointed, as we enjoyed super looks at this very attractive species, at fairly close quarters. Shortly after having enjoyed our picnic lunch, at a picnic area along the main road through the rainforest, we were treated to the spectacle of a Great Black Hawk circling above the rainforest. This is a very uncommon species anywhere in South America and we were very fortunate to see it so well.

The following morning we went for a walk in some rather scrubby woodland above the hotel where we were staying. This area yielded three new species for us, Red-eyed Vireo, Scrub Greenlet and best of all, super close looks at beautifully plumaged Caribbean Martins, who put on a spectacular ariel display for us, as a flock was flying along using the updraft from the cliffs below, to fly around in a large loop and they came very close to us at the top of the loop. In the afternoon we enjoyed a very smooth crossing to Little Tobago where we enjoyed watching large numbers of breeding Red-billed Tropicbirds and Red-footed and Brown Boobies, as they cruised around the steep cliffs of the island. We also enjoyed good looks at a male Black-faced Grassquit and we were shown a young Audubon's Shearwater in a nesting burrow, underneath the roots of a tree.

The following morning we took another walk in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, enjoying good looks at several species of birds, but failed to add to our list. While enjoying a very pleasant lunch at a much lower altitude on the ridge, we managed to observe a Yellow-legged Thrush of the all dark endemic Tobago race, which showed fairly well. The rest of the day was spent driving to the southern end of the island, where we checked into our very pleasant hotel, in the very touristy part of Tobago.

Next, we spent a very productive morning at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, where we found many new species for the tour. In and around the open ponds we found a small flock of beautiful White-cheeked Pintails, several Least Grebes and good numbers of Green Herons. There was a large number of Barn Swallows swooping down and skimming the surface of the ponds. Martyn managed to pick out a Cliff Swallow amongst them, which is once again, a rare visitor to Trinidad and Tobago and we enjoyed prolonged looks at this visitor from North America. At the back of the sewage ponds there was an area of mangroves and a walk along the edge of the mangroves produced

some very fine Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, superb looks at the very uncommon Mangrove Cuckoo and then we picked out a male Blackpoll Warbler, in full breeding plumage, which once again, is a very scarce visitor to Trinidad and Tobago. We then did some birding at a couple of lakes on the Lowlands Golf Course. New birds here included a single Great Blue Heron, a sizable flock of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and several very uncommon Masked Ducks, which included a superb male, all seen at very close quarters. We then found an adult female Ring-necked Duck, which once again is a rare visitor to Trinidad and Tobago. In the afternoon we visited the Grafton Estate at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, in order to coincide with the time when they put out food for the local birds. In no time at all we were surrounded by dozens of Rufous-vented Chachalacas, Pale-vented Pigeons and Eared Doves all competing madly for food, just a few metres away from us. We managed to find a new bird coming into the feeders, a very nice female Red-crowned Woodpecker.

On our last morning of the tour, we decided to pay a second visit to the Bon Accord Sewage Farm and were rewarded with fine scope views of an immature Purple Heron, which was only the second record for South America. What a way to finish off the tour! Due to the prolonged drought, we did miss a couple of wetland species, because the swamps were almost bone dry, however, we more than made up for these, by the 9 species of vagrants that we found during the tour, which made this a very successful, enjoyable and exciting tour. We saw almost all the target species extremely well and Trinidad and Tobago lived up to its reputation as a marvelous introduction to neotropical birding.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

PODICIPEDIDAE

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus* Good numbers present at the Bon Accord Sewage

Farm, in Tobago.

PROCELLARIIDAE

Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri* We observed a small fluffy chick in a nest, under the roots of a tree on Little Tobago Island, in Tobago. John James Audubon 1785-1851 is remembered as the father of American ornithology and as a notable artist, collector and author.

PHAETHONTIDAE

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* We enjoyed an incredible spectacle of dozens of these very beautiful birds, flying in and around their nesting cliffs on Little Tobago Island, in Tobago.

PELECANIDAE

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* Good numbers observed just offshore, on many occasions, both in Trinidad and in Tobago.

SULIDAE

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* We very much enjoyed watching large numbers of nesting birds on Little Tobago Island, in Tobago. This species nests in trees. The large majority of birds were dark morph birds, but there were also good numbers of light morph birds.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* There were also large numbers of this species nesting on Little Tobago Island, unlike the Red-footed Booby, this species nests on sea cliffs.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* We observed small numbers along the edge of the Gulf of Paria and observed large numbers of this species roosting amongst the Scarlet Ibis in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary, in Trinidad.

ANHINGIDAE

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* We saw small numbers along the Gulf of Paria and in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary in Trinidad and there were also small numbers present at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

FREGATIDAE

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Small numbers were observed along the coast of both islands and we enjoyed watching them buffeting and bullying boobies on Little Tobago Island, where they were hoping that the boobies would disgorge their last meal.

ARDEIDAE

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* A solitary bird was observed at a small dam in the Lowlands Golf Course, in Tobago. This is a North American species and it is very difficult bird to find anywhere in South America.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi* A very uncommon bird in Trinidad and Tobago, we were very fortunate to observe a single bird very well, at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, in Trinidad.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Amazingly, we observed an immature of this species at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago. This was only the second sighting of this species for South America. Below is a photograph of the actual bird we saw, used here, with the kind permission of Martyn Kenefick.



Great White Egret *Ardea alba* Small numbers observed throughout the tour.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* Small numbers scattered throughout the tour, on both islands, with much larger numbers in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* Good numbers observed in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* Seen well at South Oropuche Swamp and Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary in Trinidad and at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Good numbers seen throughout the tour.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* First observed in a small mangrove swamp at Manzanilla, on the east coast of Trinidad, followed by much larger numbers in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens* Seen very well at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* First observed along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad, followed by closer, much better sightings at Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* Seen very well indeed at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber* Small numbers observed along the Gulf of Paria, which was then followed by one of the great highlights of the tour, when we watched literally hundreds of birds coming into roost in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

The brilliance of this bird's plumage has to be seen to be believed!

ANATIDAE

- Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* We enjoyed watching a particularly tame flock of these birds at a small lake on the Lowlands Golf Course, in Tobago.
- White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis* This very beautiful bird was enjoyed by all, at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago, where we observed several birds very well indeed.
- Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* We saw a pair of birds in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad and this was followed by a much better sighting of a small flock of birds at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.
- Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* A very rare vagrant to Trinidad and Tobago; we were extremely fortunate to observe an adult female at the Lowlands Golf Course, in Tobago.
- Masked Duck** *Nomonyx dominica* A very rare breeding resident on Trinidad and a rare visitor to Tobago. Therefore, we were very fortunate to watch a family party, at an unusually close quarters, on a small lake in the Lowlands Golf Course, in Tobago.

CATHARTIDAE

- Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus* An extremely common species, which we recorded daily throughout Trinidad.
- Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura* Also recorded daily throughout Trinidad, but in much smaller numbers.

PANDIONIDAE

- Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* This fairly common winter visitor, was recorded regularly throughout the tour.

ACCIPITRIDAE

- Gray-headed Kite** *Leptodon cayanensis* Somewhat surprisingly, we observed this uncommon forest species extremely well, on three separate occasions. Firstly, flying above the forest at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and then we enjoyed two subsequent sightings at Grand Riviere.
- Swallow-tailed Kite** *Elanoides forficatus* This uncommon breeding visitor to Trinidad, from the mainland, was seen in flight, close to Galera Point, in Trinidad.
- Plumbeous Kite** *Ictinia plumbea* This fairly common breeding visitor, was regularly encountered throughout Trinidad.
- Long-winged Harrier** *Circus buffoni* We saw up to three individuals of this uncommon resident, including both light and dark morph birds, while birding in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad.
- White Hawk** *Leucopternis albicollis* Yet another uncommon resident; we saw it very well on two separate occasions, flying above the forests in the Asa Wright Nature Centre, in Trinidad.
- Common Black-Hawk** *Buteogallus anthracinus* Regularly encountered during our time

in Trinidad.

Great Black-Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga* We were fortunate to enjoy super looks at this uncommon resident flying above the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis* Regularly encountered in more open areas of Trinidad.

Gray Hawk *Asturina nitida* We enjoyed splendid scope views of a perched individual in the South Oropuche Swamp, followed by a second sighting of a bird in flight close to Grand Riviere.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* An uncommon winter visitor to Trinidad, where we saw a solitary bird in flight, close to Galera Point. It is a much commoner winter visitor to the island of Tobago, where we saw it on a daily basis.

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus* Three pale morph birds seen well, during our time in Trinidad.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* We enjoyed a very good close sighting of a bird in flight, while birding along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus* A rare bird anywhere in the world; we were very fortunate to watch an adult bird performing its courtship display, shortly after we had enjoyed our lunch in the bus shelter! While birding along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range.

FALCONIDAE

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Super scope views of a perched individual at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, in Trinidad; followed by three sightings of birds in flight, during our time in Tobago.

CRACIDAE

Rufous-vented Chachalaca *Ortalis ruficauda* A very common bird in Tobago; we enjoyed eye-ball to eye-ball views at the Grafton Estate feeders.

Trinidad Piping-Guan *Pipile pipile* We enjoyed superb looks at this critically endangered species, at our second attempt, at Grand Riviere. This was undoubtedly one of the great highlights of the tour. This species is classified as critical in 'Threatened Birds of the World'. It only occurs in the eastern half of the Northern Range, in northern Trinidad. Its population is now very small and continues to be threatened by illegal hunting and habitat loss.

RALLIDAE

Purple Gallinule *Porphyryla martinica* Seen well in the South Oropuche Swamp in Trinidad and again, at a small lake at the Lowlands Golf Course, in Tobago.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Small numbers in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad and small numbers also present at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

JACANIDAE

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* Seen very well in both Trinidad and Tobago.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* A rare visitor to Tobago; Denis saw one from the bus during the drive to Speyside.

CHARADRIIDAE

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* Another bird which we saw well throughout the tour.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* First observed along the Gulf of Paria and then again right next to our hotel, at Grand Riviere.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* First recorded along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad, followed by several good sightings at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* A few in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad and a couple at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* Recorded at Aripo Agricultural Research Station and South Oropuche Swamp in Trinidad and at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* Small numbers present at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station and South Oropuche Swamp in Trinidad and at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* A very common winter visitor, which recorded on most days of the tour.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* A small flock was seen well in the scope, along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* A wintering flock shared our hotel at the Blue Waters Inn, at Speyside, in Tobago.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* One seen briefly at the Aripo Agricultural Research Station and several birds observed at the South Oropuche Swamp.

LARIDAE

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* A rare visitor to Trinidad and Tobago, two individuals observed well amongst a daytime roost of Laughing Gulls, along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* A very uncommon visitor to Trinidad and Tobago, once again, two individuals observed well amongst a daytime roost of Laughing Gulls, along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* We enjoyed watching the large daytime roost along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad and we recorded small numbers along the coast of Tobago.

STERNIDAE

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* Seen well along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad and in coastal areas of Tobago.

Yellow-billed Tern *Sterna superciliaris* We enjoyed good scope views of this species along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex* We also enjoyed good scope views of this species along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

RYNCHOPIDAE

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* We also enjoyed good scope views of this very attractive species along the Gulf of Paria, in Trinidad.

COLUMBIDAE

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* This introduced species was commonly encountered throughout the towns and villages of Trinidad.

Scaled Pigeon *Columba speciosa* Only observed at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, in Trinidad; where we enjoyed good scope views of perched birds.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Columba cayennensis* Not seen at all on Trinidad but proved to be common on Tobago, where we saw it on a daily basis.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* Observed in flight in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary, in Trinidad and then on a daily basis in Tobago.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti* Commonly encountered on both islands.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* Not observed in Trinidad, but proved to be very common throughout Tobago.

Gray-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufaxilla* We only observed this species in Trinidad. It is normally a shy and retiring species of dense rainforest. However, it was particularly tame around the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, where two or three were normally present, most of the time.

PSITTACIDAE

Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerinus* We enjoyed good sightings of small flocks on both Trinidad and Tobago.

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* This species was often observed in noisy, small flocks, flying over the rainforest at the Asa Wright Nature Centre. On one occasion, we enjoyed good scope views of a perched bird, in the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Orange-winged Parrot *Amazona amazonica* It was very nice to see an *Amazona* parrot that was very common. We recorded it on a daily basis, on both islands.

CUCULIDAE

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* This beautiful species of New World cuckoo, is a rare resident, in the mangroves of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, we were very fortunate to enjoy stunning and prolonged scope views of this species, on both of our visits to the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

- Squirrel Cuckoo** *Piaya cayana* This very large species of New World cuckoo, was observed very well at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and again at Grand Riviere.
- Little Cuckoo** *Piaya minuta* This very small species of New World cuckoo is a scarce and secretive resident of Trinidad. We observed a solitary bird, unusually well, in the South Oropuche Swamp.
- Greater Ani** *Crotophaga major* An uncommon resident of Trinidad; we saw a solitary bird very well while birding in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.
- Smooth-billed Ani** *Crotophaga ani* Commonly encountered in all open lowland areas throughout both Trinidad and Tobago.

TYTONIDAE

- Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* A single bird flew across the road in front of our bus, just as we were leaving the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary, in Trinidad.

STRIGIDAE

- Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** *Glaucidium brasilianum* Seen briefly in the spotlight at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and then we enjoyed terrific scope views of a bird during the daytime, at Grand Riviere.

STEATORNITHIDAE

- Oilbird** *Steatornis caripensis* Observing this rather prehistoric looking bird, at Dunstan Cave, at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, was undoubtedly one of the great highlights of the trip. It was wonderful to see them at close range and to hear their rasping calls, without having to disturb them.

NYCTIBIIDAE

- Common Potoo** *Nyctibius griseus* We enjoyed stunningly close scope views, of a bird at its daytime roost, in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

- Short-tailed Nighthawk** *Lurocalis semitorquatus* Seen once by Chris at dawn, at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and Chris saw a second bird fly over our heads at Grand Riviere, once again at dusk, while we were waiting for the Trinidad Piping Guan to appear.

APODIDAE

- Band-rumped Swift** *Chaetura spinicauda* Small numbers were seen well on a couple of occasions along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range and in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

- Gray-rumped Swift** *Chaetura cinereiventris* One or two were seen well along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range, in Trinidad; followed by a couple of birds seen well flying above the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

- Short-tailed Swift** *Chaetura brachyura* By far the commonest lowland swift on both islands, where we saw it well on many occasions.

Fork-tailed Palm-Swift *Tachornis squamata* Seen well on a number of occasions, during our time in Trinidad.

TROCHILIDAE

Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsute* Commonly encountered throughout both islands.

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy* Only rarely occurs at hummingbird feeders, we saw it well in the forests of both Trinidad and Tobago.

Little Hermit *Phaethornis longuemareus* We enjoyed several good looks at this species in forest and scrub, during our time in Trinidad.

White-tailed Sabrewing *Campylopterus curvipennis* This species is an uncommon resident in the forest of the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago and one or two hilltops in neighboring Venezuela, occurring nowhere else in the world. Therefore, we were very pleased to enjoy good, prolonged scope views of an adult male on the Gilpin Trace track, in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve of Tobago.

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* This very attractive species of hummingbird proved to be common on both islands, it was often just inches away from us at the hummingbird feeders, in the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Green-throated Mango *Anthracothorax viridigula* We were very fortunate to observe a male of this uncommon species perched in mangroves during our boat trip, in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis* Seen well on almost every day of the tour.

Ruby-topaz Hummingbird *Chrysolampis mosquitus* Females observed well in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad, which were followed by daily sightings of both males and females during our time in Tobago.

Tufted Coquette *Lophornis ornatus* A female was often present at flowering bushes in front of the veranda at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Blue-chinned Sapphire *Chlorostilbon notatus* Commonly encountered during our time in Trinidad.

White-chested Emerald *Agyrtria brevirostris* Very numerous at the hummingbird feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, where we saw it extremely well.

Copper-rumped Hummingbird *Saucerottia tobaci* This was the most frequently encountered hummingbird in a wide variety of habitats, we saw it very well in both Trinidad and Tobago.

TROGONIDAE

White-tailed Trogon *Trogon viridis* Frequently encountered during our time in Trinidad.

Violaceous Trogon *Trogon violaceus* We also enjoyed several good sightings of this trogon during our time in Trinidad.

Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris* We saw it very well along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range, in Trinidad and this was followed by a second sighting along the Gilpin Trace track, in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, on Tobago.

ALCEDINIDAE

Belted Kingfisher *Ceryle alcyon* One bird observed flying along the mangroves, in the small bay behind Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.

Ringed Kingfisher *Ceryle torquata* Seen very well on one occasion, in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana* Seen briefly on one occasion in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad.

MOMOTIDAE

Trinidad Motmot *Momotus bahamensis* Since arriving back from Trinidad and Tobago, Martyn has informed me that the subspecies in Trinidad and Tobago has very recently been raised to full species status. We enjoyed many good sightings of this spectacularly plumaged species, throughout the tour.

GALBULIDAE

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda* Another beautifully plumaged species which we saw well below Blanchisseuse Road, in the foothills of the Northern Range, in Trinidad. We enjoyed a second sighting along the Gilpin Trace, in Tobago.

RAMPHASTIDAE

Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus* Yet another beautiful bird which we observed frequently in Trinidad, including good scope views from the veranda of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

PICIDAE

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus* Absent from Trinidad but quite common on Tobago, where we saw it very well, we saw it particularly well at the feeding station, on the Grafton Estate.

Red-rumped Woodpecker *Veniliornis kirkii* A not uncommon, but inconspicuous bird; we enjoyed good looks at a pair of birds in mangroves close to Manzanilla, on the East Coast of Trinidad. We enjoyed a second, very good sighting, during our walk along the Gilpin Trace, in Tobago.

Golden-olive Woodpecker *Piculus rubiginosus* A fairly common bird of both islands, which we saw well on both islands.

Chestnut Woodpecker *Celeus elegans* Seen by Chris on one occasion, in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* Seen well on all of the days we spent in Trinidad.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos* This uncommon species of woodpecker was seen well on two separate occasions and we watched it in the scope, on both occasions. The first sighting occurred at Manzanilla, on the east coast of Trinidad and our second sighting took place at Grand Riviere, also in Trinidad.

FURNARIIDAE

Pale-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis albescens* This shy and inconspicuous species responded well to tape playback along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

Stripe-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis cinnamomea* This shy and inconspicuous species was observed briefly along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range, of Trinidad.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomea* This common species was observed very well in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station, and in the South Oropuche Swamp.

Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans* Somewhat surprisingly, we saw this uncommon species on three separate occasions; we saw it particularly well in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Gray-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis* Seen by some members of the group in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* Seen well on one occasion, along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus* Absent from Trinidad, this species is a shy and uncommon on Tobago. We were very fortunate to see it well on both occasions that we birded the Main Ridge Forest Reserve.

Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus susurrans* Seen well on many occasions, both in Trinidad and in Tobago.

THAMNOPHILIDAE

Great Antshrike *Taraba major* This impressive bird was seen on a daily basis at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, where we saw both males and females very well.

Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus canadensis* Once again, both males and females were observed very well at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus* A common but beautiful bird; we saw both males and females very well, on a number of occasions throughout the tour.

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis* An uncommon resident of dense forest on both islands; we saw both males and females very well, on both of our visits to the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris* Seen very well on numerous occasions, during our time in Trinidad.

White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora grisea* Absent from Trinidad, we found it to be fairly common on both our visits to the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

Silvered Antbird *Sclateria naevia* We saw this attractive but uncommon species, very well on two separate occasions, along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere. It does not occur on Tobago.

White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes* Another attractive and uncommon species, we saw it well on one occasion along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

COTINGIDAE

Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano* Little wonder that this bird was voted 'Bird of the

Trip` by tour participants. Following a great deal of searching in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, we managed to enjoy super looks at a couple of males, who had been calling continuously, while we were searching for them.

PIPRIDAE

White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus* Observed almost daily during our time in Trinidad, including several birds lekking.

Blue-backed Manakin *Chiroxiphia pareola* This species occurs on Tobago, but not in Trinidad. We saw it well on both of our visits to the Main Ridge Forest Reserve.

Golden-headed Manakin *Pipra erythrocephala* This stunningly plumaged bird was seen almost daily, during our time in Trinidad.

TYRANNIDAE

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum* A single bird responded well to tape playback, along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii* Observed daily from the veranda of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* A common and conspicuous bird of both islands.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleagineus* We enjoyed daily sightings from the veranda at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and we saw it on one occasion, in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon superciliaris* This species was seen well along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range and again, in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

Northern Scrub-Flycatcher *Sublegatus arenarum* An uncommon resident of mangrove swamps and dry forest on Trinidad; we saw one bird very well in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum maculatum* Particularly fond of mangroves, we saw an individual very well, in mangroves, in the South Oropuche Swamp, in Trinidad. It is absent from Tobago.

Yellow-breasted Flycatcher *Tolmomyias flaviventris* We enjoyed a few good sightings in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Fuscous Flycatcher *Cnemotriccus fuscatus* Uncommon on Trinidad, but common on Tobago. We saw it well along the Gilpin Trace, in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve and on the Grafton Estate, both sightings occurred in Tobago.

Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus euleri* This uncommon species was observed very well along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range and again on the walk to the Oilbird cave, in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre. Carl Hieronymus Euler 1834-1901, was the Swiss consul in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1897 until his death. The ornithologist Jean Louis Cabanis first described

- the flycatcher from a specimen which Euler had sent him. Euler's collection of 369 species of birds, most of which were collected on his farm are housed in the Berlin Museum. Unfortunately, today only 40% of this number can now be found in the valley which Euler farmed.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher** *Contopus cooperi* This species is an uncommon non-breeding visitor from North America; we were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at a solitary bird in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, in Trinidad.
- Tropical Pewee** *Contopus cinereus* Our first sighting occurred along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range, followed by a second sighting at Grand Riviere.
- Pied Water-Tyrant** *Fluvicola pica* This attractive species was seen well in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station and in the South Oropuche Swamp.
- White-headed Marsh-Tyrant** *Arundinicola leucocephala* Another attractive species which we saw well in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station and in the South Oropuche Swamp.
- Venezuelan Flycatcher** *Myiarchus venezuelensis* Absent from Trinidad, this species is a scarce resident of Tobago. We enjoyed a couple of good sightings in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve.
- Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus* An uncommon resident in Trinidad, where we saw it only once, at Manzanilla, on the east coast of Trinidad. It is far more common in Tobago, where we saw it almost daily.
- Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus* A common and conspicuous species on Trinidad, but absent from Tobago.
- Boat-billed Flycatcher** *Megarynchus pitangua* We enjoyed good looks at this species at the Asa Wright Nature Centre and again at Grand Riviere.
- Streaked Flycatcher** *Myiodynastes maculatus* Seen well on a few occasions, during our time in Trinidad.
- Piratic Flycatcher** *Legatus leucophaius* Once again, seen well on a few occasions, during our time in Trinidad. This species takes over the nests of both caciques and oropendolas, which it drives away from the nest by sheer persistence.
- Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus* A common and conspicuous bird on both islands.
- Gray Kingbird** *Tyrannus dominicensis* An uncommon bird on Trinidad; we saw a few birds well in the South Oropuche Swamp and it proved very common in Tobago, where we saw it on a daily basis.
- Black-tailed Tityra** *Tityra cayana* Seen very well on one occasion in the scope from the veranda of the Asa Wright Nature Centre; followed by a second sighting, at Grand Riviere.

HIRUNDINIDAE

- Caribbean Martin** *Progne dominicensis* This species only breeds in the Greater and Lesser Antilles and Tobago. So it has a very small breeding range; in the non-breeding season it disappears off the face of the earth. Its winter grounds are presently unknown, although it is thought that they probably migrate to

- northeastern Brazil, during the non-breeding season. It is exceptionally rare in Trinidad, but fortunately, this very attractive species is a very common breeding visitor to the lowlands of Tobago, where we saw it very well on many occasions.
- Gray-breasted Martin** *Progne chalybea* Absent from Tobago, however, it proved to be very common throughout the whole of Trinidad.
- White-winged Swallow** *Tachycineta albiventer* This very attractive species proved to be fairly common around wetlands in both Trinidad and Tobago.
- Southern Roughwing** *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* Commonly encountered throughout our time in Trinidad, it is a rare visitor to Tobago.
- Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* This attractive species of swallow is a rare visitor to Trinidad and Tobago, from breeding grounds in North America. We were very fortunate to enjoy good close looks at a solitary bird during both of our visits to the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* We enjoyed small wintering flocks of this species, in both Trinidad and Tobago.

TROGLODYTIDAE

- Rufous-breasted Wren** *Thryothorus rutilus* Commonly encountered on both islands, but often frustratingly difficult to see well.
- Southern House Wren** *Troglodytes musculus* Another common bird which was seen on both islands, this species is not a skulker.

MIMIDAE

- Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus* Another common inhabitant of both islands, which occurs mainly in open areas. This species is a relatively recent colonist from the mainland and is spreading rapidly, due to deforestation on both islands.

TURDIDAE

- Yellow-legged Thrush** *Platycichla flavipes* We only observed this uncommon species on one occasion, while having lunch at a small roadside eatery, close to the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago. Eventually, most of us enjoyed good looks a beautiful male of the all black *xanthoscelus* race, which is endemic to Tobago.
- Cocoa Thrush** *Turdus fumigatus* Commonly encountered throughout Trinidad, we saw it particularly well at the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.
- Bare-eyed Thrush** *Turdus nudigenis* Commonly encountered on both islands and once again, observed particularly well at the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.
- White-necked Thrush** *Turdus albicollis* A rather shy species of thrush, even so, we enjoyed good sightings of this attractive species on both islands. It was a little tamer than usual at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, where we enjoyed our best looks.

VIREONIDAE

- Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus* This species is both a resident on the islands and a passage migrant. We only encountered it on the island of Tobago, where it proved not uncommon in dry woodland around Speyside, we also saw it well on Little Tobago Island.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus* This species is a scarce visitor to Trinidad; so it was somewhat surprising for us to observe it on three separate occasions. The first sighting occurred in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, the second, in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station and the third sighting, occurred along the Monte Video Road, at Grand Riviere.

Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes* This species is absent from Trinidad, but proved to be fairly common in dry woodland, on the island of Tobago.

Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons* Absent from Tobago; but not uncommon on Trinidad, where we saw it well on a few occasions.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* A common bird in Trinidad, which we saw well on a number of occasions.

FRINGILLIDAE

Trinidad Euphonia *Euphonia trinitatis* We only observed this uncommon species on one occasion; we saw a pair of birds very well along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere. Despite its name this species is not confined to Trinidad, it also occurs on mainland South America, in Venezuela.

Violaceous Euphonia *Euphonia violacea* Very common in Trinidad, where we saw it on a daily basis, we enjoyed particularly good close looks, from the veranda at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

PARULIDAE

Tropical Parula *Parula pitiayumi* This very beautiful species was observed well on one occasion, while we were birding along the Monte Video Road, at Grande Riviere.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia* Seen well on both islands, on a number of occasions.

Magnolia Warbler *Dendroica magnolia* This species is a rare vagrant to Trinidad and Tobago, with only two previous sightings, both in the 1960's. We very much enjoyed watching an adult male, in full breeding plumage, along the Gilpin Trace track, in the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, in Tobago.

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata* This species is a scarce annual migrant to both islands, mainly occurring in October and November and very occasionally in March and April. Therefore, we were very fortunate to find an adult male, in full breeding plumage, in the mangroves at the Bon Accord Sewage Farm, in Tobago. We enjoyed prolonged looks at this very attractive species.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* This species is a rare winter visitor to both islands. So once again, we were very fortunate to enjoy a quick look at an adult male, in full breeding plumage, while birding along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range of Trinidad.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* A common winter visitor to Trinidad and Tobago; we saw both males and females on a few occasions, while in Trinidad.

Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis* Another common winter visitor; which we saw on a daily basis, during our time in Trinidad.

Masked Yellowthroat *Geothlypis aequinoctialis* This species is an uncommon resident of freshwater swamps in Trinidad. We only saw it on one occasion, in the South Oropuche Swamp. We did see it very well indeed and at very close quarters.

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus* We enjoyed a few good sightings of this fairly common resident, during our time in Trinidad.

COEREBIDAE

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* By far the commonest bird in Trinidad and Tobago; we saw literally hundreds of birds, on each and every day of the tour.

THRAUPIDAE

Bicolored Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor* An inconspicuous bird, which in these islands only occurs in the mangrove swamps on the island of Trinidad. We saw it particularly well, during our first sighting, in the South Oropuche Swamp, where we enjoyed good close looks at an adult male. We saw it on another occasion in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* A very common bird, which we encountered on almost a daily basis, on both islands.

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager *Habia rubica* This is a rather shy species, which is unusual in the tanager family. We observed a pair of birds fairly well, while walking to the Oilbird cave, in the grounds of the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo* This beautiful species is another very common species throughout Trinidad.

Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* Another very common species, which we saw on every day of the tour.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* Even more common than the preceding species, we also saw it on every day of the tour.

Turquoise Tanager *Tangara mexicana* Small numbers observed in rainforest throughout Trinidad.

Speckled Tanager *Tangara guttata* This beautiful species is an uncommon resident of montane forest in Trinidad. We saw a pair very well on one occasion, while birding along the Blanchisseuse Road, in the Northern Range.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola* Another common but beautiful species of tanager, which we saw well on a number of occasions, during our time in Trinidad.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* this very attractive species proved to be fairly common, during our time in Trinidad.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* Another splendid bird, which we saw daily, during our time in Trinidad.

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* Another stunning species, which we saw daily, during our time in Trinidad.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus* Yet another stunning species which we observed at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, in Trinidad and frequently in Tobago.

EMBERIZIDAE

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* A common roadside bird, which is particularly fond of grassy edges and agricultural fields. We saw several small flocks in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Black-faced Grassquit *Tiaris bicolor* Absent from Trinidad; it is a common bird in

Tobago, which we saw well on a number of occasions. We also saw it on Little Tobago Island.

Red-capped Cardinal *Paroaria gularis* An uncommon bird of marshes and lagoons on the west coast of Trinidad. We enjoyed splendid looks at this very attractive species in the South Oropuche Swamp.

CARDINALIDAE

Grayish Saltator *Saltator caerulescens* Small numbers observed throughout our time in Trinidad.

ICTERIDAE

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Agelaius icterocephalus* A common bird of freshwater marshes in Trinidad. We saw it well in the Nariva Swamp, near Manzanilla and in the South Oropuche Swamp.

Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris* A bird of pasture and water meadows, we enjoyed watching this splendid species in the Aripo Agricultural Research Station.

Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris* Seen on a daily basis, in all lowland areas throughout both Trinidad and Tobago.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* Scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* We also enjoyed several sightings of this less common species, in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis* We frequently encountered this stunning looking bird during our time in Trinidad.

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* We enjoyed scattered sightings of this attractive species, throughout our time in Trinidad.

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* Seen on a daily basis throughout the tour; watching the males calling and displaying, while hanging upside down, was a real treat.

MAMMALS

Silky Anteater *Cyclopes didactylus* We saw two of these very small species of anteaters; curled up into tiny fluffy balls, in the crotch of mangrove trees, during our boat ride in the Caroni Swamp Bird Sanctuary. These mammals are nocturnal

and when we saw them they were sleeping, during the daytime.

Greater White-lined Bat *Saccopteryx bilineata* The only daytime flying bat in Trinidad and Tobago. We saw it well on a number of occasions in Trinidad.

Greater Spear-nosed Bat *Phyllostomus hastatus* Every evening while enjoying dinner at the Blue Waters Inn, in Tobago; one of these bats would fly around the dining room. Directly outside the dining room, several of these bats could be seen feeding from the hummingbird feeders.

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis* This small rainforest squirrel was seen well in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Climbing Rat *Rhipidomys sclateri* Only seen at first light, feeding on scraps that had fallen to the ground, from the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre.

Red-rumped Agouti *Dasyprocta leporina* Up to 10 individuals foraging under the feeders at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, on a daily basis. This species is difficult to see elsewhere in Trinidad, as it is normally very shy indeed because it is actively hunted for food.

Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus* This introduced species ran across the track we were walking along, in the South Oropuche Swamp.