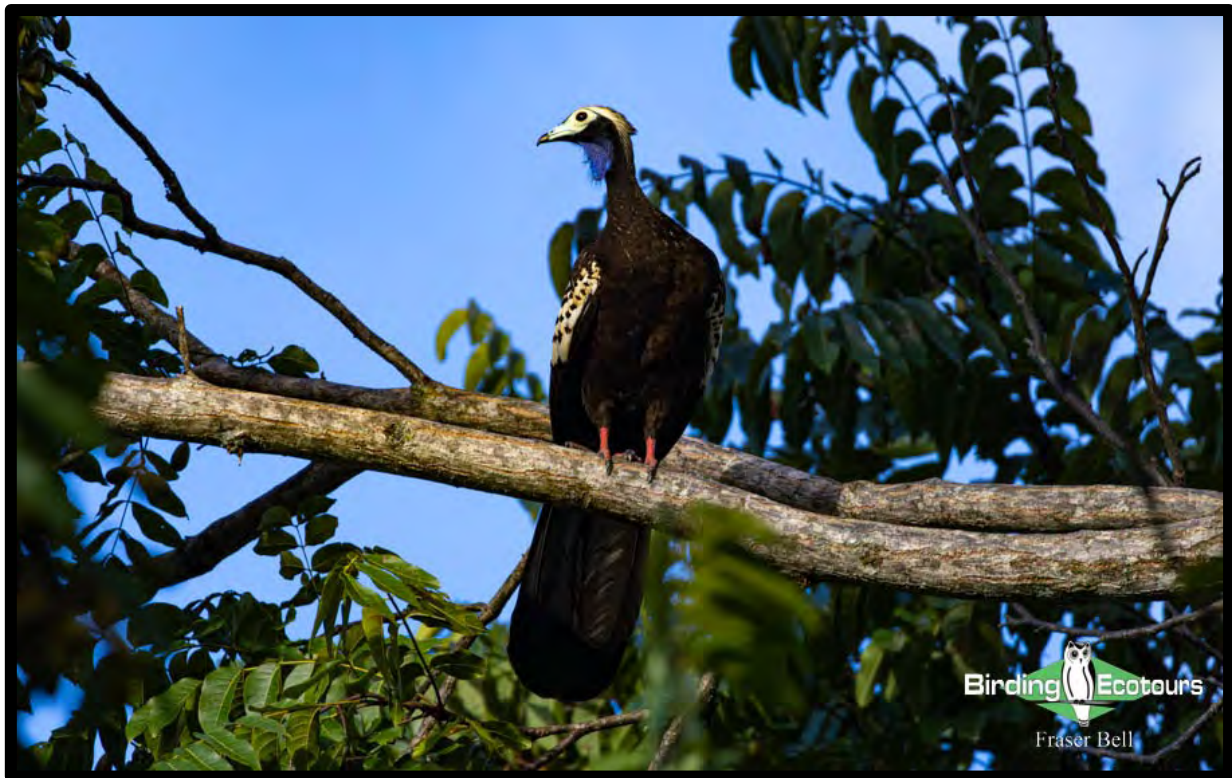




TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO BIRDING TOUR: AN INTRODUCTION TO NEOTROPICAL BIRDING

28 NOVEMBER – 09 DECEMBER 2024

By Fraser Bell



*We had repeated views of the Critically Endangered **Trinidad Piping Guan** in the remote forests of Grand Riviere.*

Overview

This birding tour of Trinidad and Tobago began in northeast Tobago on the 28th of November 2024, and concluded in Piarco, Trinidad, on the 9th of December 2024. The tour focused on seeing a broad range of species from Neotropical bird groups, from hummingbirds, trogons, and tanagers, as well as targeting specials such as **Oilbird**, **Bearded Bellbird**, nesting **Red-billed Tropicbird**, and the spectacle of thousands of **Scarlet Ibis** coming to roost. We had excellent views of all these, along with repeated encounters with the country's two true endemics, **Trinidad Piping Guan** and **Trinidad Motmot**, and several near-endemics including **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet**, and **White-tailed Sabrewing**.

We began the tour by birding across Tobago. We first visited the raucous seabird colonies on Little Tobago Island, then searched for Tobago's shy forest species in the dense interior of the Main Ridge Reserve, and finished our time on the island by covering a range of coastal and wetland sites including Centre Street Ponds, Bon Accord Sewage Ponds, Tobago Plantation, and Pigeon Point. On arrival in Trinidad we visited Trincity Sewage Pools before continuing to the Asa Wright Centre, where we checked in for a five-night stay. From here we explored the dry savannah at Aripo, the Nariva Swamp, and the high elevation forests along the Blanchisseuse Road. We also made the most of an afternoon boat trip through Caroni Swamp, spotlighting for nocturnal wildlife on the way out, and made the most of the birding and relaxed pace at Asa Wright throughout. We then transferred to the northeast for two nights at a remote coastal hotel in Grand Riviere, searching for the Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) **Trinidad Piping Guan** and other forest species. Our final birding was at a lively hummingbird garden on the way to the airport.



*The near-endemic **White-tailed Sabrewing** is an impressive hummingbird and a big target during our time in Tobago.*

We recorded 222 bird species on this Trinidad and Tobago birdwatching tour (with four of these heard only). Aside from the species mentioned above, other highlights seen on the tour included **Mangrove Cuckoo**, **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird**, **Tufted Coquette**, **American Flamingo**, **Red-footed Booby**, **Scarlet Ibis**, **Ornate** and **Black Hawk-Eagles**, **Guianan Trogon**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Channel-billed Toucan**, **Blue-and-yellow Macaw**, **Blue-backed**, **White-bearded** and, **Golden-headed Manakins**, **Yellow-legged Thrush**, **Trinidad Euphonia**, **Masked Cardinal**, **Bicolored Conebill**, and **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**. We also enjoyed finding several country rarities including the first record of **Snail Kite** for Tobago, and **Rufous Crab Hawk**, **Summer Tanager** and **Variegated Flycatcher** in Trinidad.

In addition to the exceptional birding, we encountered a range of other wildlife, including reptiles such as **Spectacled Caimen**, **Black Tegu**, several snakes including **Ruschenberger's Tree Boa**, and the Tobago endemic, **Eyespot Gecko**. Mammalian highlights included watching **Greater Bulldog Bats** fishing at dusk in the Caroni Swamp, and **Greater Spear-nosed Bats** drinking nectar from hummingbird feeders outside our accommodation in Tobago.



*We were treated to brilliantly colorful species throughout our time in Trinidad and Tobago, such as this **Green Honeycreeper**.*

Bird and animal lists for this Trinidad and Tobago birding tour follow the report and you can also view the [eBird trip report here](#), where you can see more bird photos.

Detailed Report

Day 1, 28th November 2024. Arrival into tranquil Tobago

Today was an arrival day with the group meeting over dinner at our hotel in northeast Tobago. Over our first of many amazing Caribbean meals, we discussed the upcoming tour, our top bird and animal targets for the next two weeks, and celebrated an impressive wedding anniversary within the group.



*Loud and animated groups of **Rufous-vented Chachalacas** welcomed us to Tobago.*

Day 2, 29th November 2024. Little Tobago Island

For the early risers, some birding at first light produced our first of many **Copper-rumped Hummingbirds**, **Barred Antshrikes**, **Yellow-bellied Elaenias**, and **Ospreys**, plus **Northern White-fringed Antwrens** and a **Scrub Greenlet**, which is not found on Trinidad, and a **Fuscous Flycatcher**, which is much more reliable on Tobago. Over breakfast we enjoyed watching **Brown Pelicans** plunge diving into the azure Caribbean Sea, and afterwards we boarded our glass-bottom boat to Little Tobago Island. On arrival, we were greeted by a stunning **Trinidad Motmot** – a great way to kick off the tour with one of the two country endemics! At the top of the island, we had excellent views of nesting **Red-billed Tropicbirds**, **Brown** and **Red-footed Boobies**, and **Magnificent Frigatebirds** as they returned to their nests in the forests around us. Some frigatebirds were actively chasing tropicbirds, which was quite the spectacle to watch, and a surprise vagrant **Crested Caracara** was an unexpected highlight. While on the island we also saw **Brown-crested Flycatchers**, **Northern Waterthrushes**, **Peregrine**, and plenty of tiny **Ocellated Geckos**, a Tobago endemic. The frigatebirds escorted us away from the island, and we then toured the reef from the boat, seeing plenty of colorful fish despite the unfortunate visible coral bleaching.



*There is a healthy population of elegant **Red-billed Tropicbirds** nesting on Little Tobago Island.*

After a nice lunch, where we were joined by **Ruddy Turnstones** and **Bananaquits** trying to raid our drinks, and a few **Rufous-vented Chachalacas** awkwardly sat in the tree next to our table, we had some down time. In the afternoon most of the group walked a quiet road near the hotel, birding dry scrub forest. This proved productive, and in addition to the species we saw on the pre-breakfast walk, we added **Pale-vented Pigeons**, **White-tipped Doves**, **Short-tailed Swifts**, **Blue-black** and **Black-faced Grassquits**, and the subtly beautiful **Ochre-lore Flatbill**. We gathered before dinner to enjoy some drinks on the peaceful restaurant decking, listening to the waves and chatting, and after dinner watched a party of **Greater Spear-nosed Bats** raiding hummingbird feeders with their impressively long tongues.

Day 3, 30th November 2024. Tobago's Main Ridge Reserve

Leaving before breakfast we headed south towards Tobago's Main Ridge Reserve. Our first stop was near Argyll waterfall where we saw the cryptically plumaged **Common Potoo** on a day roost, plus, our first **Violaceous Euphonia**, **Cocoa Woodcreeper**, **Smooth-billed Anis**, **Little Blue Heron**, and **Spectacled Thrushes**. We continued up into the Main Ridge Reserve, one of the world's oldest protected forests. Birding along the main road through the reserve was very productive, with **Fuscous Flycatcher**, **Golden-olive Woodpecker** and plenty of **Trinidad Motmots** and **Rufous-tailed Jacamars** close to the roadside, allowing good photographic opportunity. A roadside stop gave amazingly close views of a pair of perched **Orange-winged Amazons** (a common species but often seen in flight or in the distance), but the highlight was a trio of **Blue-backed Manakins**, including two cracking males feeding in a fruiting tree beside the

road. Unfortunately, although we heard **Venezuelan Flycatcher** calling a few times, it stayed hidden in the canopy.

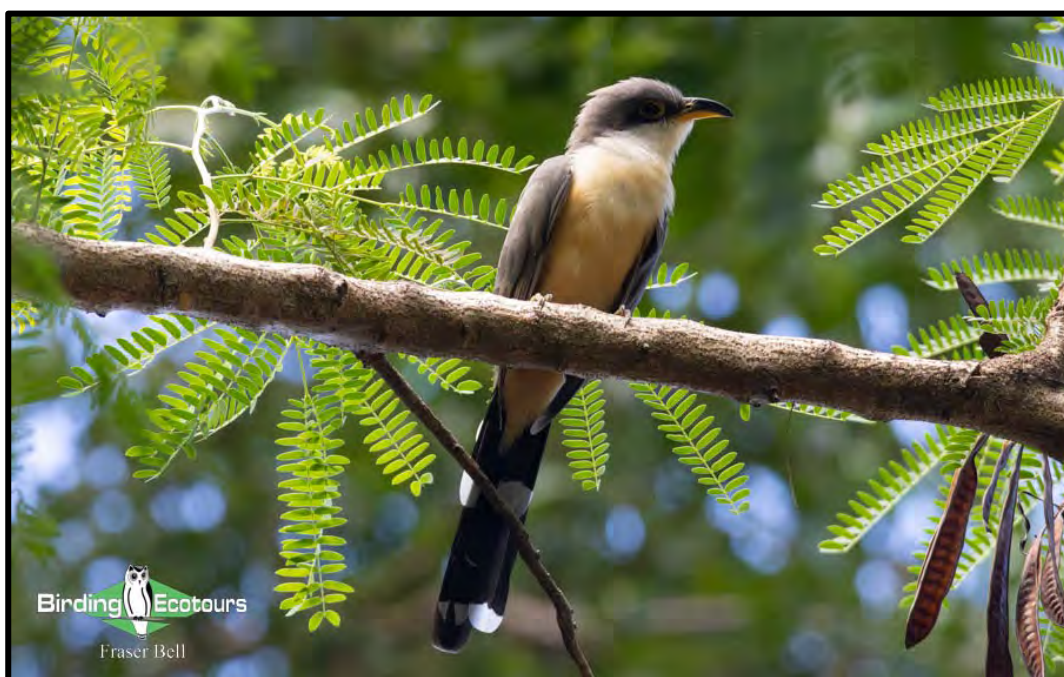


*The endemic **Trinidad Motmot** is wonderfully common on Tobago.*

After breakfast overlooking the forest canopy and the Caribbean Sea beyond, we headed to Gilpin Trace, a trail through tall, old rainforest. We quickly picked up a pair of **Plain Antvireos**, then added more targets including **Stripe-breasted Spinetails**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, **White-necked Thrush**, **Rufous-breasted Wren**, and another pair of **Blue-backed Manakins**. A **Yellow-legged Thrush** perched to give most in the group brief views, before it quickly continued into the forest understory, and a stealthy **White-throated Spadebill** sally-feeding in the mid-canopy took some searching before we found it. Having successfully seen our targets, we left the forest trail to have some more relaxed birding at a hummingbird gallery over lunch. Here, at least 30 near-endemic **White-tailed Sabrewings** were on show. It was such a treat to be surrounded by them as they fed around us, their gleaming white tails flashing in the sun. Also in attendance were **Rufous-breasted Hermits**, **Grey-rumped Swifts**, and **White-lined Tanagers**, amongst others, and a **Red-tailed Squirrel** sampling the fruit tables. The standout moment came when our last major target, a **Great Black Hawk**, circled below us, backlit against the distant sea. We eventually tore ourselves away and continued south to our next hotel overlooking Scarborough harbor. Along the way we enjoyed a cold drink overlooking the picturesque Castara Bay, where we picked up **Royal Terns**, **White-winged Swallows**, and more **Red-footed** and **Brown Boobies**.

Day 4, 1st December 2024. South Tobago wetlands

After a leisurely breakfast we traveled the short distance to Centre Street Ponds, a group of four pools tucked behind the busy streets of Bon Accord and surrounded by scrub. These are a magnet for waterbirds, and we recorded six species of waterfowl, including the resident **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Blue-winged Teals**, **White-cheeked Pintails**, and three rare migrants, two **Lesser Scaups**, a **Ring-necked Duck**, and an **American Wigeon**. A group favorite was the **Least Grebes**, likely thanks to three small chicks. Around the pond margins we saw many common waterbird species, including **Green** and **Black-crowned Night Herons**, **Western Cattle** and **Great Egrets**, and many **Anhingas**. A scan of a perched flock of resident **White-winged Swallows** turned up six **Sand Martins**, a single **Barn Swallow**, and a rare **American Cliff Swallow**, all winter visitors. Despite already finding some vagrants here, our rarest bird of the tour came next, in the form of a juvenile **Snail Kite** flying over the ponds, which gave us the honor of finding the first record for Tobago!



*Although it has a large global range, **Mangrove Cuckoo** can be a tough bird to see and we spent time with this inquisitive bird in southern Tobago.*

At Bon Accord Sewage Treatment Ponds we had our best views of **Purple Gallinule** for the trip, along with improved views of **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks**. The most productive birding came just outside the ponds along quiet roads and drainage ditches lined with open scrubby woodland. Here we saw **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, along with **Eared Doves**, **Pale-vented Pigeons**, a **Belted Kingfisher**, **Wattled Jacanas**, **Tricolored** and **Great Blue Herons**, and most of our wading birds of the trip: **Least Sandpiper**, **Short-billed Dowitchers**, **Greater** and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Semipalmated Plovers**, and **Hudsonian Whimbrels**. Our final birding stop of the morning was the mangroves at Tobago Plantations where we found another rare migrant, a **Pied-billed Grebe** (safe to say the guides were the most excited about this find!). Although the boardwalk was a great setting, it was quiet, save for a **Parrot Snake**. We eventually had excellent

views of our target **Mangrove Cuckoo** as it hopped through the branches above us, watching the group cautiously. After a brilliant lunch stop, we returned to the hotel and spent the early afternoon relaxing – what a morning!

Once the sun had cooled off, most of the group headed to Pigeon Point, a coconut-lined beach at Tobago's southwest corner. Some swam, others had a drink, and we all connected with a **Common Tern** (which isn't common here!), found while sitting on a bench overlooking the crashing waves. Birding was otherwise fairly quiet, with the usual raucous groups of **Royal Terns** and **Laughing Gulls** on the fishing boats and buoys, **Brown Pelicans** plunge diving just offshore and **Carib Grackles** and **Ruddy Turnstones** feeding around our feet.

Day 5, 2nd December 2024. Transfer to Trinidad and the Asa Wright Centre

Those who joined the pre-breakfast birding walk around the hotel grounds added **American Yellow Warbler** to the group list and soaked up our last views of some Tobago specials, such as **Trinidad Motmot**. Our short flight to Trinidad had been brought forward so, after a quick breakfast, we left for the airport, but only after a group of **Green-rumped Parrotlets** delayed our departure as they flew into a tree right outside the hotel entrance. Close views of this subtly beautiful species were much appreciated.

We arrived into Trinidad mid-morning and first checked the wetlands near the Millennium Lakes Golf Course. We started familiarizing ourselves with common species in Trinidad, with the highlights being **Red-breasted Meadowlark**, **American Pygmy** and **Ringed Kingfishers**, **Pied Water Tyrant**, **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**, and **Saffron Finches**, plus a group of migratory **Black-necked Stilts** and a few **Spot-legged Wood Turtles**. A lunch of roti, curry, and ice cream gave everyone a real taste of Trinidad before we began the drive north to the Asa Wright Centre, following the winding Blanchisseuse Road into the forested northern range. A short birding stop along the way was very productive, and we had views of a displaying male **White-bearded Manakin**, along with a **Tufted Coquette** trap-line feeding, a **White Hawk**, **Ochre-bellied Flycatchers**, and a **Golden-fronted Greenlet**.

The Asa Wright Centre is one of the world's best ecolodges - great food, comfortable rooms, and world-class birding from the veranda and nearby trails, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed checking in with a rum punch in hand, and walking out onto the veranda to be welcomed by nine species of hummingbirds! These included **White-chested Emeralds**, a **Little Hermit**, **Blue-chinned Sapphires**, a **Black-throated Mango**, and several stunningly beautiful **Long-billed Starthroats**. We also saw **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **Crested Oropendolas**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, and both **Green** and **Purple Honeycreepers** coming to the feeders. The constant 'CLANG' from male **Bearded Bellbirds**, whistles from Trogons, and nasal calls of **Channel-billed Toucans** created a wonderfully relaxing atmosphere. After an amazing dinner we headed out for a short night walk, with the highlight being several endemic **Trinidad Chevron Tarantulas**. Some also saw **Short-tailed Nighthawks** foraging near some lights, which turned out to be our only sighting on tour.



*The Asa Wright Centre veranda is ideal for relaxing and watching species like this charming **White-chested Emerald**.*



*Staying at the Asa Wright Centre is great fun – right in the middle of primary rainforest and immersed in the landscape. This beautiful **Cloudy Snail-eating Snake** was found right next to the reception!*

Day 6, 3rd December 2024. East Trinidad

At first light the group gathered on the veranda, enjoying coffee or hot cocoa while watching hummingbirds, honeycreepers, and tanagers up close. After breakfast we headed south and east from the center, to bird the remaining patches of Trinidad's lowland savanna, a habitat now largely restricted to the Aripo area. We had a successful session, adding a number of lowland species. Highlights included excellent views of **Striped Cuckoo**, **Black-crested Antshrikes**, **Pale-breasted Spinetail**, **Blue Dacnis**, **Southern Beardless-Tyrannulets**, **Long-winged Harrier**, and a shy but unexpected **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**. We also saw **Bran-colored Flycatcher** and our only **Olive-gray Saltator** of the trip. We had poor views of two pairs of **Trinidad Euphonias**, a big target on this tour owing to its restricted global range. After a bit of effort, the whole group eventually saw a male feeding on mistletoe berries. We arrived at Manzanilla Beach on Trinidad's eastern coastline, a wild and windswept spot overlooking the Atlantic where strong gusts made for an entertaining lunch. Amazingly, from this spot we could see a nesting pair of **Blue-and-yellow Macaws**, a species reintroduced to Trinidad after being lost from the island in the 1960s. This impressive pair gave prolonged views as they squawked to each other and showed off their bright plumage while excavating their nest.



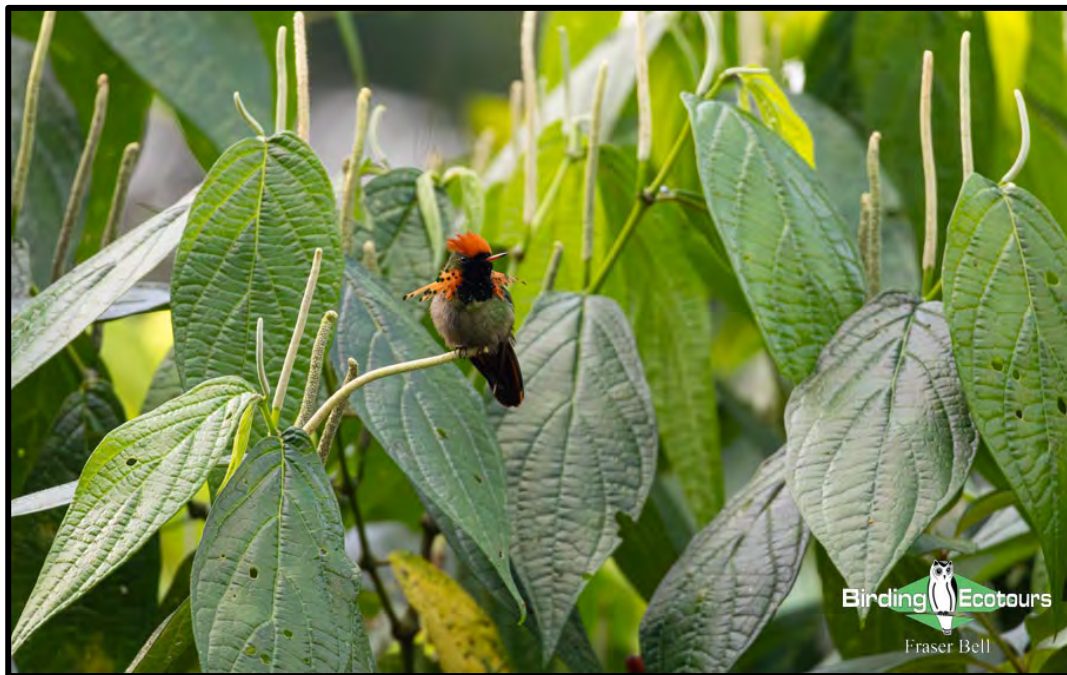
*We stumbled upon this impressive **Common Black Hawk** in some roadside mangroves.*

Driving south along the eastern coastline we noted many **Savanna** and **Common Black Hawks**, and **Yellow-headed Caracaras**. We spent an enjoyable afternoon birding the mangroves, flooded grassland, and marshes of Nariva Swamp. In the mangroves we saw **Bicolored Conebills**, **Northern Scrub-Flycatcher**, **Silvered Antbird**, and both **American Pygmy** and **Ringed Kingfishers** – the Antbird gave particularly good views as it belted out its repetitive song between the mangrove roots. In the flooded fields we picked up **Yellow-hooded Blackbirds** and **Yellow**

Orioles, along with regulars but, unfortunately, a lone **Masked Yellowthroat** was seen by few. The standout birds were two infrequent visitors to Trinidad, found one after the other in neighboring riverside trees: a smart **Variegated Flycatcher**, and a **Rufous Crab Hawk**. The hawk was a group favorite, and everyone admired the huge claws it used to crush crabs. Rain moved in and cut our birding short, preventing us from searching for a few remaining targets such as White-tailed Goldenthrush, and Pinnated Bittern, though we did find a smart adult **Snail Kite** on the return journey.

Day 7, 4th December 2024. Trinidad's northern range

Over another tasty Trinidad breakfast at Asa Wright, we watched **Little Hermit** and **Tufted Coquette** feeding on flowers below the veranda, while **Crested Oropendolas** squabbled at the fruit table, knocking fruit to the ground for **Black Tegu** and **Tree Runner** lizards to feast on. We then set off north to target high-elevation species along Blanchisseuse Road, arriving to Las Lapas in good time. A short walk here proved to be one of our most productive stops of the tour. A slow fly-by **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** was seen well by all, close enough to appreciate the rufous and black facial markings. We also had another major tour target in the shape of four **Lilac-tailed Parrotlets**, which briefly perched in a nearby tree. Other highlights included six **Channel-billed Toucans** (in the same bare tree), both **Collared** and **Green-backed Trogons**, **Red-rumped Woodpeckers**, **Golden-crowned Warbler**, and a small flock of **Yellow-legged Thrushes** (which are rare on Trinidad, and of the greyer *melanopleura* subspecies). A **Olive-sided Flycatcher** saying its “quick three beers!” call rounded out the walk nicely.



Tufted Coquette are brilliant birds, and rightly group favorites. They are tiny, like a large bee, and have a fun wiggling dance when they feed on nectar!

Further birding along the road proved very productive. We watched two brilliant male **Golden-headed Manakins** displaying – moonwalking along a branch before flying with whistling pops – when a majestic **Black Hawk-Eagle** soared low over the canopy. While canopy birding can be hard at times, we saw a lot of species across the morning, adding **White-flanked Antwren**, **Northern Tropical Pewees**, **Forest Elaenias**, **American Redstart**, **Tropical Parula**, and **White-shouldered Tanager** to our group list. After lunch at Brasso Seco, where we also learned about the local chocolate-making process, we birded nearby forest roads. We had quality views of a male **Great Antshrike**, but the highlight was a pair of **Blue-headed Parrots** in flight which gave everyone a chance to note their small size, distinct calls, and bright red rumps. A calling **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** delayed us for almost an hour, and we eventually left it without much success (though this was mediated later in the trip). On the way back to Asa Wright we stopped a few more times, seeing many **Cocoa Thrush** along the roadside and finding a cracking male **Summer Tanager**, a rare migrant here.

Day 8, 5th December 2024. Caroni Swamp

We spent the morning exploring the amazing trails at Asa Wright. At dawn we could hear **Little Tinamou** and **Bright-rumped Attila** calling from the forest, and the veranda was busy with brightly colored hummingbirds, honeycreepers, tanagers, and **Violaceous Euphonias**. After breakfast we walked down to the **Bearded Bellbird** lek, where at least six males were in attendance, and calling in close proximity, with two constantly chasing each other through the trees. The **White-bearded Manakin** lek was quieter than usual but several males were displaying, their brilliant white beards glowing in the dark understory, until they buzzed after a female that passed through. Other highlights included a male **White-bellied Antbird**, a pair of **Lineated Woodpeckers**, and, for those keen enough to make the walk to the roosting cave, the best of the morning was an **Oilbird**! A true oddity, it's the world's only nocturnal, fruit-eating flying bird and the sole member of the *Steatornithidae* family. After a banquet for lunch, we headed south out of the forest and down into the lowlands again. At the grasslands of Orange Grove we had good looks at two **Long-winged Harrier** coursing over the fields, and a late **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** (most had already migrated south) was a surprise.



*The population of **American Flamingo** in the Caroni Swamp is expanding.*



*One of the stars of the Caroni Swamp is the **Masked Cardinal**, a smart-looking bird with a lot of character. This one came close to investigate our group!*

The afternoon and evening were spent at Caroni Swamp, which was a major tour highlight, as always. From the boat we had close views of **Masked Cardinals**, **Greater Anis**, **Scarlet Ibises**, **Short-tailed** and **Fork-tailed Palm Swifts**, plus a pair of roosting **Tropical Screech-Owls**, a **Green-throated Mango** perched high in the canopy, a pair of **Straight-billed Woodcreepers**, and many **Ruschenberger's Tree Boas**. Despite these impressive sightings, the true spectacle of Caroni swamp came at dusk. We watched as hundreds of **Scarlet Ibises** flew in to roost, joined by **American Flamingos**, **Little Blue**, **Tricolored**, and **Great Blue Herons**, and **Great** and **Snowy Egrets**, turning the green mangrove leaves pink and white from the sheer abundance of birds. We watched this against a backdrop of the setting sun and a brilliant feast on the boat with rum punches. As the sky darkened, we headed back out of the marsh. Spotlighting on the return trip we saw **Grey-cowled Wood Rails**, **Pauraques**, a **Common Potoo**, and watched **Greater Bulldog Bat** hunting over the water. What a fantastic day!

Day 9, 6th December 2024. Enjoying the Asa Wright Centre

We had a full day at the impressive Asa Wright Centre. Some in the group stayed on the veranda to focus on photography, others swam in the natural pools, but most joined some short birding sessions along the trails to focus on our remaining targets. Highlights from the veranda included **Short-tailed Hawk**, **Channel-billed Toucan**, **Black-throated Mangos**, **Long-billed Starthroats**, and **Bay-headed Tanagers**. **Tufted Coquette** is always the star bird here. This beautiful hummingbird looks akin to a bee due to its small size and it's bumbling flight behavior which makes it a tricky subject to photograph. Those who explored the trails enjoyed better views of **White-flanked Antwrens**, **Plain-brown Woodcreeper**, and added **Euler's Flycatcher**, a noisy trio of **Red-crowned Ant Tanagers**, and an uncharacteristically showy **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser**. After afternoon tea on the veranda we had a lone **Scaled Pigeon**, and our best views of **Guianan Trogon**. Despite checking both evenings, we heard neither Spectacled nor Mottled Owls during our stay.

Day 10, 7th December 2024. Transfer to Grand Riviere

We had one final morning at Asa Wright. Among the **Short-tailed** and **Grey-rumped Swifts** overhead we picked out at least four **Chestnut-collared Swifts**. Both **Green-rumped** and **Collared Trogons** were active and vocal, giving their best views of the tour. The **White-bearded Manakin** and **Bearded Bellbird** lek were busy with at least eight males of each on display. One can never tire of these, especially with the constant 'CLANG!' calls echoing around the forest.

After a leisurely lunch we said our goodbyes to Asa Wright and began the drive to Grand Riviere on Trinidad's northeast coast. Our progress along this scenic coastal road was slow, so we delayed check-in and headed straight up the Monte Video Road to look for Trinidad's rarest endemic. We arrived in time to see six **Trinidad Piping Guan** coming to feed in their favored nutmeg trees. Everyone had excellent views of these odd but impressive birds, a Critically Endangered species and a major tour target. We returned to our beachfront hotel for a well-earned meal and drinks, falling asleep to the sound of the sea at one of the most stunning locations of Trinidad.



*The Asa Wright Centre is one of the best places in the world to see **Bearded Bellbird**. Their deafening calls are certainly memorable!*



***Purple Honeycreeper** are staggeringly beautiful.*

Day 11, 8th December 2024. Birding Grand Riviere

At first light we met to have coffee overlooking the pristine beach, then headed back to Monte Video Road. Again we had excellent views of **Trinidad Piping Guan**, watching them feed and leap between branches while calling and wing-churring. Further along the road we birded in some open forest. We picked up **Grey-headed Kite**, a pair of vocal **Crimson-crested Woodpeckers**, **Boat-billed Flycatchers**, **Yellow-olive Flatbill**, and **Yellow-rumped Caciques**, all new for the trip. We also improved our views of **Turquoise Tanagers**, though the flock remained frustratingly high in the canopy and fly-by **Black-tailed Tityras** and **White-winged Becards** were unfortunately brief. A real highlight of the morning was a very responsive **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** that gave brilliant views as it flew around calling and drew a crowd of mobbing songbirds – satisfying, given we missed one earlier in the tour.

After breakfast back at the hotel, we returned to a lower section of the hillside road above the hotel. Despite the time of day, bird activity was high, and we encountered a large mixed flock and some fun, fast paced birding followed. Highlights included **Chivi Vireo** which was new for the trip list, plus the best looks of several more common species. Rain ended the morning early, but a **Trinidad Euphonia** gave good views just before we left. The afternoon was spent relaxing, with some swimming in the sea or the saltwater pool, others birded from their balconies or enjoyed the view with a coconut juice in hand. That evening, a Trinidad Christmas party was in full swing, with festive food, music, and rum-based eggnog cocktails. Over a memorable final meal we said goodbye to four of the group, as they were departing early to catch their flight back to the United States. Bird of the trip was awarded to the impressive **Scarlet Ibis**, with **Tufted Coquette**, and **Trinidad Piping Guan** given honorable mentions.



*We got close to a pair of **Lineated Woodpecker** feeding in bamboo while exploring the trails of the Asa Wright Centre.*



*We saw all 12 of Trinidad's common hummingbirds on the drive to the airport, including this **White-necked Jacobin**.*

Day 12, 9th December 2024. Departure

At first light we had coffee overlooking the Caribbean Sea before heading up the hill for one last forest birding session. Activity was fairly quiet between rain showers, though several **Trinidad Piping Guans** were present, and although **Grey-fronted Dove** remained heard only, two **Black-tailed Tityras** flew into the same tree as the guans and gave great views. We also had an amazing sighting of a **Common Lancehead**, one of the most venomous snakes in the Americas. It was on the forest floor near the guan viewing platform, giving safe but close views and a reminder of why we avoid walking unmanaged trails during the tour!

After breakfast we travelled back towards Port of Spain, seeing **Ringed Kingfishers** and **Yellow-rumped Caciques**. We stopped for lunch at Bajnath's Estate, a hummingbird garden, where we immediately connected with **Ruby-topaz Hummingbirds**, a stunning migratory species returning to Trinidad for winter. Over three hours we observed 12 hummingbird species, ate a tasty homemade lunch, with local wine and some sweet treats, before continuing to our airport hotel. The final birding session was at some grassland near the hotel, where we had superb views of a pair of **White-headed Marsh Tyrants**, and two **Ruddy-breasted Seedeaters**. The seedeaters were once common in Trinidad, but now rare due to their popularity as caged birds, so it was nice to see two of these birds happily feasting on grass seeds. A brilliant final sighting to close out the trip!

As always, Trinidad and Tobago is a fantastic destination for birdwatchers, and our group had a great time throughout. I'm looking forward to returning soon and hopefully birding with you all again before long!

Bird List – Following IOC (Version 14.2 / August 2024)

All species were seen, aside from the birds marked with (H) after the common name, which were 'heard only'.

The following notation after species names is used to show conservation status following BirdLife International: EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable. (Endemic) = Trinidad and Tobago endemic birds.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Tinamous (Tinamidae)	
Little Tinamou (H)	<i>Crypturellus soui</i>
Ducks, Geese, Swans (Anatidae)	
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>
America Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>
White-cheeked Pintail	<i>Anas bahamensis</i>
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>
Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows (Cracidae)	
Rufous-vented Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis ruficauda</i>
Trinidad Piping Guan (Endemic) CR	<i>Pipile pipile</i>
Flamingos (Phoenicopteridae)	
American Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopus ruber</i>
Grebes (Podicipedidae)	
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)	
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>
Scaled Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas speciosa</i>
Ruddy Ground Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
Grey-fronted Dove (H)	<i>Leptotila rufaxilla</i>
Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cuckoos (Cuculidae)	
Greater Ani	<i>Crotophaga major</i>
Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>
Striped Cuckoo	<i>Tapera naevia</i>
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>
Mangrove Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus minor</i>
Nightjars and Allies (Caprimulgidae)	
Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>
Short-tailed Nighthawk	<i>Lurocalis semitorquatus</i>
Potoos (Nyctibiidae)	
Common Potoo	<i>Nyctibius griseus</i>
Oilbird (Steatornithidae)	
Oilbird	<i>Steatornis caripensis</i>
Swifts (Apodidae)	
Chestnut-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne rutila</i>
Gray-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>
Short-tailed Swift	<i>Chaetura brachyura</i>
Fork-tailed Palm Swift	<i>Tachornis squamata</i>
Hummingbirds (Trochilidae)	
White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>
Rufous-breasted Hermit	<i>Glaucis hirsutus</i>
Green Hermit	<i>Phaethornis guy</i>
Little Hermit	<i>Phaethornis longuemareus</i>
Brown Violetear	<i>Colibri delphinae</i>
Ruby-topaz Hummingbird	<i>Chrysolampis mosquitos</i>
Black-throated Mango	<i>Anthracothorax nigricollis</i>
Green-throated Mango	<i>Anthracothorax viridigula</i>
Tufted Coquette	<i>Lophornis ornatus</i>
Long-billed Starthroat	<i>Helimaster longirostris</i>
White-tailed Sabrewing	<i>Campylopterus curvipennis</i>
Copper-rumped Hummingbird	<i>Saucerottia tobaci</i>
White-chested Emerald	<i>Chrysuronia brevirostris</i>
Blue-chinned Sapphire	<i>Chlorestes notata</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)	
Gray-cowled Wood Rail	<i>Aramides cajaneus</i>
Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>
Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>
Stilts and Avocets (Recurvirostridae)	
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
Plovers and Lapwings (Charadriidae)	
Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Jacanas (Jacanidae)	
Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>
Sandpipers and Allies (Scolopaciidae)	
Hudsonian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius hudsonicus</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher (VU)	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs (VU)	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers (Laridae)	
Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
Tropicbirds (Phaethontidae)	
Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>
Frigatebirds (Fregatidae)	
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
Boobies and Gannets (Sulidae)	
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>
Anhingas (Anhingidae)	
Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>
Cormorants and Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)	
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>
Pelicans (Pelecanidae)	
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns (Ardeidae)	
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Western Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Ibises and Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)	
Scarlet Ibis	<i>Eudocimus ruber</i>
New World Vultures (Cathartidae)	
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Osprey (Pandionidae)	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (Accipitridae)	
Gray-headed Kite	<i>Leptodon cayanensis</i>
Snail Kite	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>
Black Hawk-Eagle	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>
Ornate Hawk-Eagle	<i>Spizaetus tyrannus</i>
Long-winged Harrier	<i>Circus buffoni</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Common Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>
Rufous Crab Hawk	<i>Buteogallus aequinoctialis</i>
Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>
Great Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>
White Hawk	<i>Pseudastur albicollis</i>
Grey-lined Hawk	<i>Buteo nitidus</i>
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>
Owls (Strigidae)	
Tropical Screech Owl	<i>Megascops choliba</i>
Ferruginous Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>
Trogon (Trogonidae)	
Green-backed Trogon	<i>Trogon viridis</i>
Guianan Trogon	<i>Trogon violaceus</i>
Collared Trogon	<i>Trogon collaris</i>
Motmots (Momotidae)	
Trinidad Motmot (Endemic)	<i>Momotus bahamensis</i>
Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)	
Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle torquata</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
American Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle aenea</i>
Jacamars (Galbulidae)	
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	<i>Galbula ruficauda</i>
Toucans (Ramphastidae)	
Channel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos vitellinus</i>
Woodpeckers (Picidae)	
Red-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i>
Red-rumped Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis kirkii</i>
Crimson-crested Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus melanoleucos</i>
Lineated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>
Golden-olive Woodpecker	<i>Colaptes rubiginosus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Falcons and Caracaras (Falconidae)	
Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>
Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Daptrius chimachima</i>
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
New World and African Parrots (Psittacidae)	
Lilac-tailed Parrotlet	<i>Touit batavicus</i>
Blue-headed Parrot	<i>Pionus menstruus</i>
Orange-winged Amazon	<i>Amazona amazonica</i>
Green-rumped Parrotlet	<i>Forpus passerinus</i>
Blue-and-yellow Macaw	<i>Ara ararauna</i>
Typical Antbirds (Thamnophilidae)	
Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>
Black-crested Antshrike	<i>Sakesphorus canadensis</i>
Barred Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>
Plain Antvireo	<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>
White-flanked Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula axillaris</i>
Northern White-fringed Antwren	<i>Formicivora intermedia</i>
Silvered Antbird	<i>Sclateria naevia</i>
White-bellied Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza longipes</i>
Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers (Furnariidae)	
Grey-throated Leaf-tosser	<i>Sclerurus albigularis</i>
Olivaceous Woodcreeper	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus</i>
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>
Cocoa Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus susurrans</i>
Straight-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Dendroplex picus</i>
Yellow-chinned Spinetail	<i>Certhiaxis cinnamomeus</i>
Pale-breasted Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis albescens</i>
Stripe-breasted Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis cinnamomea</i>
Manakins (Pipridae)	
Blue-backed Manakin	<i>Chiroxiphia pareola</i>
White-bearded Manakin	<i>Manacus manacus</i>
Golden-headed Manakin	<i>Ceratopipra erythrocephala</i>
Cotingas (Cotingidae)	

Common Name	Scientific Name
Bearded Bellbird	<i>Procnias averano</i>
Tityras and Allies (Tityridae)	
Black-tailed Tityra	<i>Tityra cayana</i>
White-winged Becard	<i>Pachyramphus polychopterus</i>
Tyrant Flycatchers (Tyrannidae)	
White-throated Spadebill	<i>Platyrinchus mystaceus</i>
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes oleagineus</i>
Yellow-olive Flatbill	<i>Tolmomyias sulphurescens</i>
Ochre-ored Flatbill	<i>Tolmomyias flaviventris</i>
Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>
Forest Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis gaimardii</i>
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>
Bran-colored Flycatcher	<i>Myiophobus fasciatus</i>
Euler's Flycatcher	<i>Lathrotriccus euleri</i>
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>
Northern Tropical Pewee	<i>Contopus bogotensis</i>
Fuscou Flycatcher	<i>Cnemotriccus fuscatus</i>
Northern Scrub Flycatcher	<i>Sublegatus arenarum</i>
White-headed Marsh Tyrant	<i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i>
Pied Water Tyrant	<i>Fluvicola pica</i>
Venezuelan Flycatcher (H)	<i>Myiarchus venezuelensis</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarynchus pitangua</i>
Variegated Flycatcher	<i>Empidonomus varius</i>
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
Grey Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Tyrannus savana</i>
Bright-rumped Attila (H)	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>
Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis (Vireonidae)	
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>
Scrub Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus flavipes</i>
Golden-fronted Greenlet	<i>Pachysylvia aurantiifrons</i>
Chivi Vireo	<i>Vireo chivi</i>
Swallows (Hirundinidae)	

Common Name	Scientific Name
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>
Grey-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>
White-winged Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albiventer</i>
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
American Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
Gnatcatchers (Poliophilidae)	
Trilling Gnatwren	<i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i>
Wrens (Troglodytidae)	
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes musculus</i>
Rufous-breasted Wren	<i>Pheugopedius rutilus</i>
Mockingbirds and Thrashers (Mimidae)	
Tropical Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gilvus</i>
Thrushes and Allies (Turdidae)	
Cocoa Thrush	<i>Turdus fumigatus</i>
Yellow-legged Thrush	<i>Turdus flavipes</i>
White-necked Thrush	<i>Turdus albicollis</i>
Spectacled Thrush	<i>Turdus nudigenis</i>
Waxbills and Allies (Estrildidae)	
Tricolored Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>
Finches, Euphonias, and Allies (Fringillidae)	
Trinidad Euphonia	<i>Euphonia trinitatis</i>
Violaceous Euphonia	<i>Euphonia violacea</i>
Troupials and Allies (Icteridae)	
Red-breasted Meadowlark	<i>Leistes militaris</i>
Crested Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius decumanus</i>
Yellow-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus cela</i>
Yellow Oriole	<i>Icterus nigrogularis</i>
Giant Cowbird	<i>Molothrus oryzivorus</i>
Carib Grackle	<i>Quiscalus lugubris</i>
Yellow-hooded Blackbird	<i>Chrysomus icterocephalus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
New World Warblers (Parulidae)	
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>
Masked Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis aequinoctialis</i>
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Tropical Parula	<i>Setophaga pitiayumi</i>
American Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>
Golden-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>
Cardinals and Allies (Cardinalidae)	
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Red-crowned Ant Tanager	<i>Habia rubica</i>
Tanagers and Allies (Thraupidae)	
Masked Cardinal	<i>Paroaria nigrogenis</i>
White-shouldered Tanager	<i>Loriotus luctuosus</i>
White-lined Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus rufus</i>
Silver-beaked Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>
Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>
Turquoise Tanager	<i>Tangara mexicana</i>
Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>
Blue Dacnis	<i>Dacnis cayana</i>
Purple Honeycreeper	<i>Cyanerpes caeruleus</i>
Green Honeycreeper	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>
Bicolored Conebill	<i>Conirostrum bicolor</i>
Saffron Finch	<i>Sicalis flaveola</i>
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater	<i>Sporophila minuta</i>
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>
Black-faced Grassquit	<i>Melanospiza bicolor</i>
Olive-grey Saltator	<i>Saltator olivascens</i>

Total seen	218
Total heard only	4
Total recorded	222

Mammal List – Following Mammalwatching.com (September 2024)

Common Name	Scientific Name
Agouti and Acouchis (Dasyproctidae)	
Common Red-rumped Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta leporina</i>
Squirrels (Sciuridae)	
Red-tailed squirrel	<i>Sciurus granatensis</i>
Bulldog or Fishing Bats (Noctilionidae)	
Greater Bulldog Bat	<i>Noctilio leporinus</i>
Sac-winged Bats (Emballonuridae)	
Greater Sac-winged Bat	<i>Saccopteryx bilineata</i>
New World Leaf-nosed Bats (Chiroptera)	
Greater Spear-nosed Bat	<i>Phyllostomus hastatus</i>
Mongoose (Herpestidae)	
Small Indian Mongoose	<i>Urva auropunctata</i>
Total	6

**Reptile and Amphibian List – Following IUCN
Red List (April 2025)**

Common Name	Scientific Name
Freshwater Turtles (Emydidae)	
Spot-legged Wood Turtle	<i>Rhinoclemmys punctularia</i>
Alligators and Caimans (Alligatoridae)	
Spectacled Caimen	<i>Caiman crocodilus</i>
Anoles (Dactyloidae)	
Grenada Bush Anole	<i>Anolis aeneus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Common Geckos (Gekkonidae)	
Common Tropical House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i>
Dwarf Geckos (Sphaerodactylidae)	
Eyespot Gecko (Endemic)	<i>Gonatodes ocellatus</i>
Whiptails (Teiidae)	
Giant Ameiva	<i>Ameiva ameiva</i>
Amazon Racerunner	<i>Ameiva atrigularis</i>
Black Tegu	<i>Tupinambis teguixin</i>
Tropical Ground Lizards (Tropiduridae)	
Tree Runner	<i>Plica caribea</i>
Colubrid Snakes (Colubridae)	
Parrot Snake	<i>Leptophis ahaetulla</i>
Cloudy Snail-eating Snake	<i>Sibon nebulatus</i>
Boas (Boidae)	
Ruschenberger's Tree Boa	<i>Corallus ruschenbergerii</i>
Vipers (Viperidae)	
Common Lancehead	<i>Bothrops atrox</i>
True Toads (Bufonidae)	
South American Cane Toad	<i>Rhinella marina</i>
Tree Frogs (Hylidae)	
Rusty Treefrog	<i>Boana boans</i>
Total	14