

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

CUBA

February 28-March 11, 2017



Gray-fronted Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon caniceps*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

Leader: David Ascanio

IE representative: Angel Cárdenas

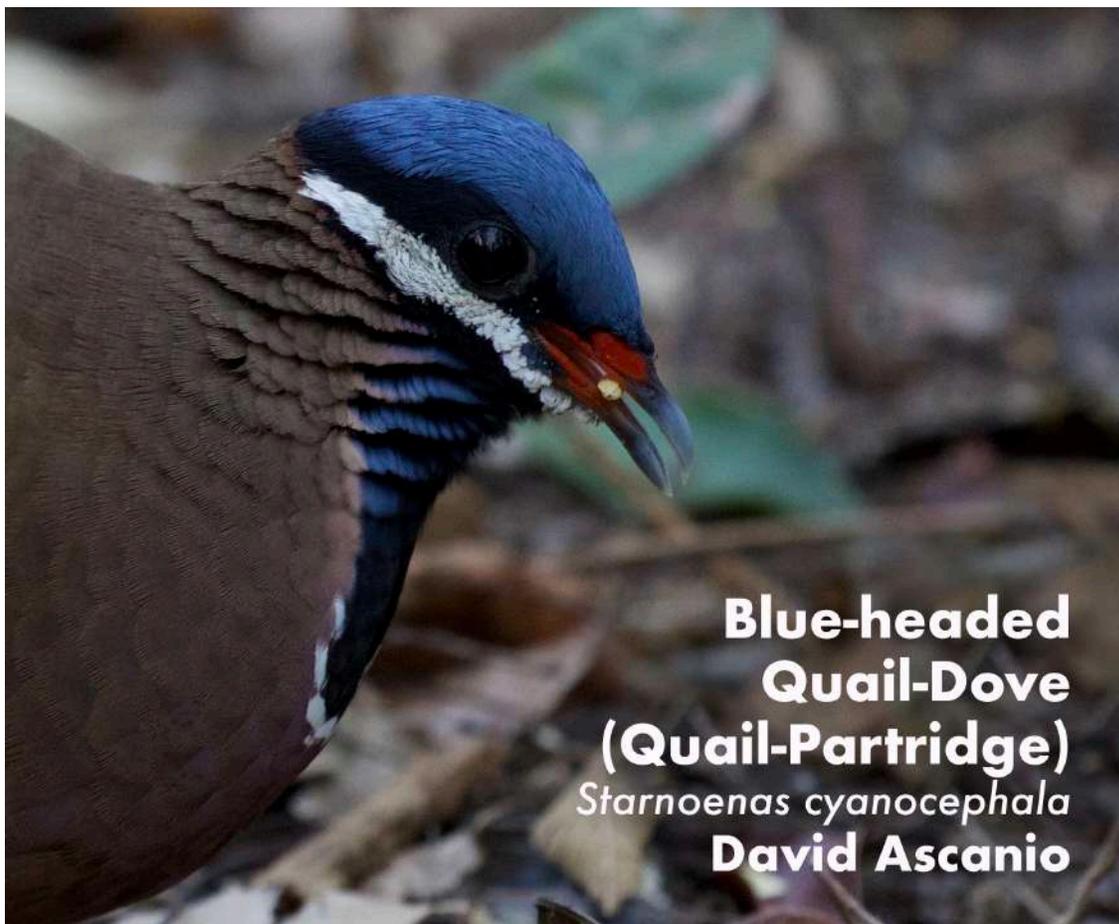
Cuban guide: Lyudmis Ramirez

Local guides: Odey Martinez, Orlando Ramirez, Esdrey Garcia, Idalmys Gonzales

Compiled by: David Ascanio

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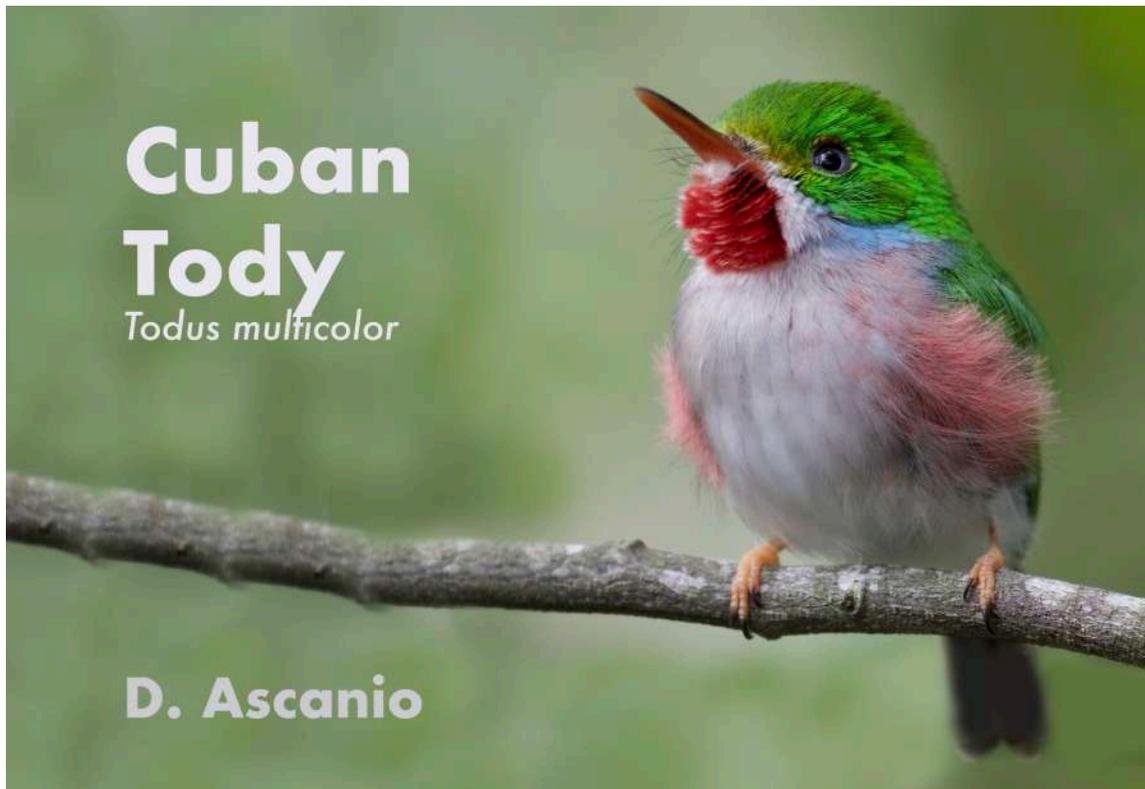
Our second-of-the-year tour to the largest of the Greater Antilles welcomed us with a mix of endemic and restricted distribution birds, also unique Caribbean culture and interesting architecture. And that's because Cuba is an island packed with superlatives! Starting from the first day we were already seeing unique birds. The day started with views of Giant Kingbird, a bird with such a huge bill that invited everyone to discuss about its diet. But, there wasn't time to philosophize about the natural history of each bird because a Cuban Pygmy-Owl was found singing from a low branch and the unique Cuban Tody flew to a limb in front of us. To round up an unforgettable morning several Cuban Crows kept flying over our heads and the threatened Plain Pigeon was observed throughout the scope. Was that all? Of course, no! We also nailed two endemic Psittacidae, the Cuban Parrot and the Cuban Parakeet perched on a fruiting tree. Wow! Is there a better way to start a tour?



Back to Camaguey we enjoyed a typical Cuban lunch and headed north, to the Jardines del Rey archipelago. Here we met Odey Martinez, a local ornithologist that has been protecting birds and its habitats for decades. With Odey we learned about projects to preserve bird habitats as we searched for the unique Cuban Gnatcatcher, the Zapata Sparrow, Cuban Bullfinch and also the Cuban Pewee. There were also few Cuban Black Hawk and several Greater Antillean Grackles. The cocktail of birds got even richer when we visited a small wetland and enjoyed views of Boreal migrants including the

locally uncommon Long-billed Curlew and the threatened Piping Plover. There were other shorebirds including short-billed dowitchers, ruddy turnstones and willets. But the secretive Bahama Mockingbird eluded us. Fortunately we had another morning so at crack of dawn in the following day we drove again to Cayo Paredón Grande and after a bit of search there it was, quietly but perched on a fairly open branch the one we were missing: the Bahama Mockingbird.

Our next location was at the opposite side of the island, in the Caribbean Sea at the Ancón peninsula. On the following day we paid a visit to the Parque El Cubano where Cuban Nightjar eluded us (despite that it was singing continuously). How frustrating is to have a bird very close and still not see it! But, this park indeed provided great views of the Cuban Trogon (Cuba's national bird), Cuban Vireo, White-crowned Pigeon, La Sagra's Flycatcher and the Cuban Emerald. In the mangrove wetlands contiguous to the hotel we saw more sandpipers, egrets and herons.



The following two days were dedicated to bird the famous Zapata peninsula, which are both a biosphere reserve and a wetland of international importance (RAMSAR site). In Bermeja we met Orlando, the famous ranger who feeds the Blue-headed and White-fronted quail doves. He also knew every nest of the endemic Bare-legged Owl and we enjoyed seeing two individuals. In the afternoon we visited Bernabe's hummingbird feeders where tour participants enjoyed seeing a male and a female Bee Hummingbird coming to a flower held on their hand! There was more to search so we had to leave to Soplillar to look for another endemic (previously called Greater Antillean Nightjar), the Cuban Nightjar. We waited until dusk and a male nightjar

came out to the forest edge but it flew away before we could see it well. So we decided to explore the inside of the forest and found him calling from the ground. Most tour participants saw it but unfortunately not everyone and we had to call the day off. The day ended with a superb meal and great music with our driver, Carlos, playing the drums.



After we nailed many endemics in the Zapata peninsula we headed to the west side of the island, to Soroa. There we visited the prosperous town of Viñales and explored one of Cuba's wonders, Los Mogotes. These amazing limestone formations were once a gigantic system of caves and today are home for another endemic bird, the Cuban Solitaire. It didn't take too long before we found a male singing and everyone enjoyed in the scope. Furthermore, in a morning in Soroa we nailed another Cuban Nightjar and with this, we had everyone to see it.

As we headed back to La Habana (the Spanish way of *Havana*) we paid a visit to the interesting community of Las Terrazas. And, I called it interesting because is one of the very few examples of sustainable and diversified economy in Cuba. There, we learned about the forest recovery project, the coffee plantations, the maternal school, the tourism program and visited artists that makes this community so unique. But above all, we nailed the last missing endemic of the tour, the Cuban Grassquit!

Back to La Habana we enjoyed a full day with lectures about the architecture and history of the colonial part of the city. This is probably the most enigmatic city in the Antilles and we enjoyed it at length. On the last morning, as we enjoyed the sunrise we

experienced the light opening to the beautiful *malecón*. Seeing old vehicles, amazing architecture, unique Spanish language and Cuba as a whole gave us a new perspective and a deeper understanding of their culture and its natural wonders. *Buen viaje!*

Now that you have learned much of Cuba's flora, fauna and people I want to invite you to join us in other destinations, equally interesting and beautiful but remarkably different from that of the Greater Antilles.

The Amazon Cruise

We sail aboard a small ship to explore the Amazon and its tributaries. Using skiffs we reach the flooded forest and other distinctive Amazonian habitats such as the sedimentary river islands and the igapo forest. We offer an optional walk to terra firme forest. Non-birding spouses like to join this cruise because of the variety of wildlife including several species of primates and an optional visit to a community. You can enjoy the photos and the video of our 2016 Amazon Cruise in:

Photo album

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157663616158820>

Video link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b3xYG0cPSo>

The Panama Canal: a relaxed and easy tour.

Panama is to enjoy first class birding at a relaxed and easy pace. We spend most of the nights in a small inn located in the town of Gamboa (Panama Canal). Enjoy short walks around the town plus a boat trip to the Chagres River. We visit the famous Pipeline road and visit the Canopy Tower, where we can see canopy species at eye level. See the photos and the video of our 2015 Panama Canal tour in:

Photo album

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157648765567967>

Video link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgnkUxwd5kw>

Costa Rica: a relaxed and easy tour.

Our *relaxed and easy* Costa Rica tour is for those who wish to see birds at various altitudinal levels, from cloud forest to lowland rain forest, all in slow pace. We include a ride along the aerial tram and we also learn about the flora and other fauna of this spectacular country. This tour is designed for seeing gaudy species such as tanagers and honeycreepers as well as many hummingbirds. We visit various hummingbird feeder stations. See the photos and video of our 2015 tour in:

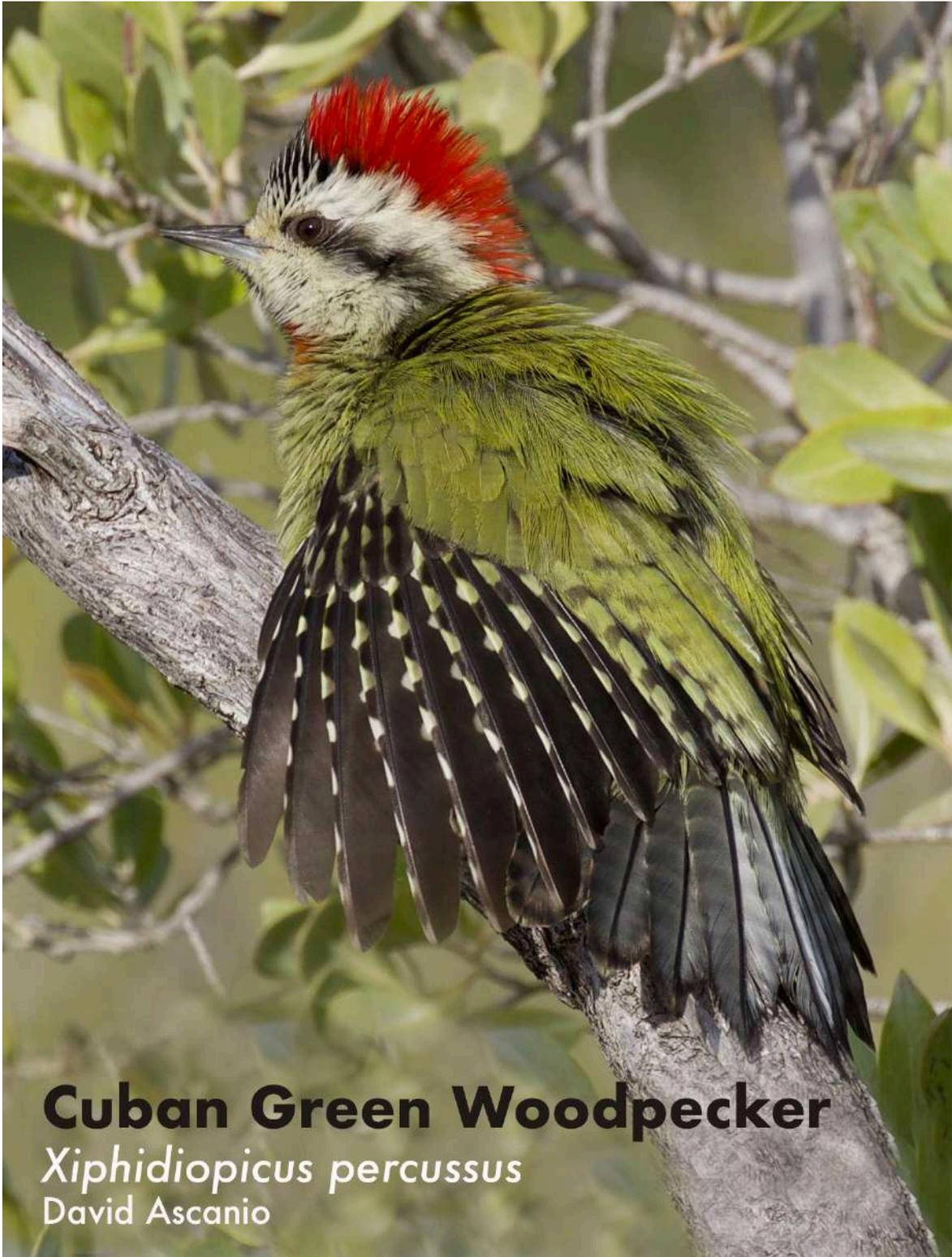
Photo album

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157659475059484>

Video link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzgD6NfVNSE>

I hope to see you again!



Cuban Green Woodpecker

Xiphidiopicus percussus

David Ascanio



Map of locations

VENT Cuba Tour

February 28 - March 11, 2017

Prepared by David Ascanio

VENT CUBA 2, 2017

February 28 – March 11, 2017

Leader: David Ascanio.

ITINERARY

28 February. Miami.

01 March. Flight to Camaguey.

02 March. Rancho La Belen. Drive to Cayo Coco.

03 March. Jardines del Rey: Cayo Coco, Cayo Paredon Grande & Cayo Guillermo.

04 March. Cayo Coco, Trinidad (Ancon peninsula).

05 March. Parque El Cubano. Drive to the Zapata Peninsula.

06 March. Zapata Peninsula: Bermeja, Palpite and Soplillar.

07 March. Santo Tomas, Havana & Soroa.

08 March. Viñales.

09 March. Las Terrazas & Havana.

10 March. Old Havana.

11 March. Departure.

THE BIRDLIST

The order, and common and scientific names are those given by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist of North American Birds, 7th edition with all current updates.

Photo album for all tours:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/>

Photo album for this tour:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157680762969682>

Waterfowl / Anatidae

West Indian Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna arborea*. Cayo Coco.

Blue-winged Teal. *Anas discors*. Cayo Coco and Ancon peninsula.

Northern Shoveler. *Anas clypeata*. Cayo Coco.

Ring-necked Duck. *Aythya collaris*. Shrimp farm, Soroa.

Red-breasted Merganser. *Mergus serrator*. Along the causeway to Cayo Coco.

Guineafowl / Numididae

Helmeted Guineafowl. *Numida meleagris*. Widespread in farmland. Semi-captive.

Flamingos / Phoenicopteridae

American Flamingo. *Phoenicopterus ruber*. Observed in cayo Guillermo and along the causeway out of Cayo Coco.

Grebes / Podicipedidae

Least Grebe. *Tachybaptus dominicus*. Cayo Coco.

Pigeons and Doves / Columbidae

Feral Pigeon, Rock Pigeon (I). *Columba livia*. Common in urban areas.

Scaly-naped Pigeon. *Patagioenas squamosa*. Flying. Las Terrazas.

White-crowned Pigeon. *Patagioenas leucocephala*. Soroa.

Plain Pigeon. *Patagioenas inornata*. Rancho La Belen.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (I). *Streptopelia decaocto*. Widespread in urban areas.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina*. Pairs were observed in arid scrubby vegetation in all locations.

Blue-headed Quail-Dove (E). *Starnoenas cyanocephala*. One of the favorite species!

Two individuals were seen at a stakeout site in Bermejas. A BIG thank you to Orlando!

Ruddy Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon montana*. One individual was seen back in the Bermeja trail in the Zapata peninsula.

Gray-fronted Quail-Dove (E). *Geotrygon caniceps*. We enjoyed wonderful views of four individuals in Bermeja.

Key West Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon chrysa*. 21 individuals were seen in Cayo Coco. A tour record!

White-winged Dove. *Zenaida asiatica*. A common species observed in lowland locations.

Zenaida Dove. *Zenaida aurita*. This was a hard-to-see species in other Antilles. It was fairly common in the Zapata peninsula.

Mourning Dove. *Zenaida macroura*. Common.

Cuckoos / Cuculidae

Great Lizard-Cuckoo. *Coccyzus merlini*. Cuckoos are amazing birds. We enjoyed views in Jardines del Rey, Santyo Tomas and Soroa.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Crotophaga ani*. A fairly common species found in lowland open habitats.

Nightjars and allies / Caprimulgidae

Greater Antillean Nightjar (Cuban Nightjar). *Antrostomus cubanensis*. First seen by about half of the group in the Zapata peninsula and later seen very well in Soroa (perched on a branch and singing!).

Swifts / Apodidae

White-collared Swift. *Streptoprocne zonaris*. Flying distantly near the Ancon peninsula.

Antillean Palm-Swift. *Tachornis phoenicobia*. Seen frequently in lowland open habitats.

Hummingbirds / Trochilidae

Bee Hummingbird (E). *Mellisuga helenae*. A female and a male were observed in Bermejas, Zapata Peninsula. Later, in Palpite we saw two males and two other females. This is THE smallest bird in the world and only slightly larger than the Vervain Hummingbird, found in Hispaniola.

Cuban Emerald. *Chlorostilbon ricordii*. An very common endemic hummingbird in Cuba. It was seen almost every day.

Rails, Gallinules and Coots / Rallidae

Clapper Rail. *Rallus crepitans*. Cayo Coco. Swimming!

Common Gallinule. *Gallinula galeata*. Cayo Coco and Las Terrazas.

Limpkin / Aramididae

Limpkin. *Aramus guarauna*. About a dozen were seen in La Belen. Wendy saw another one along the road to Bermeja.

Stilts and Avocets / Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus*. Cayo Coco. About 40 individuals.

Plovers and Lapwings / Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover. *Pluvialis squatarola*. Cayo Coco.

Semipalmated Plover. *Charadrius semipalmatus*. Cayo Coco. Common and numerous.

Piping Plover. *Charadrius melodus*. Las Coloradas beach. Great studies of a single individual.

Killdeer. *Charadrius vociferous*. Several locations.

Sandpipers and Allies / Scolopacidae

Ruddy Turnstone. *Arenaria interpres*. 90+ individuals. Cayo Coco.

Sanderling. *Calidris alba*. 33+ Cayo Coco.

Short-billed Dowitcher. *Limnodromus griseus*. Hundreds in Cayo Guillermo.

Long-billed Dowitcher. *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. A good record in Cayo Coco. One individual was seen.

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularia*. A single individual was seen twice.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. A pair in Cayo Guillermo.

Willet. *Tringa semipalmata*. Various individuals were observed. Cayo Coco.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes*. Cayo Coco.

Gulls, Terns and Skimmers / Laridae

Laughing Gull. *Leucophaeus atricilla*. A common species in Cayo Coco and vicinity.

Ring-billed Gull. *Larus delawarensis*. Cayo Coco.

Lesser Black-backed Gull. *Larus fuscus*. A individual in juvenile plumage was seen entering Cayo Guillermo.

Caspian Tern. *Hydroprogne caspia*. Cayo Coco and Shrimp farm near Soroa.

Royal Tern. *Thalasseus maximus*. Jardines del Rey.

Tropicbirds / Phaethontidae

Red-billed Tropicbird. *Phaethon aethereus*. Seen in flight in Cayo Paredón Grande.

Frigatebirds / Fregatidae

Magnificent Frigatebird. *Fregata magnificens*. Jardines del Rey archipelago.

Cormorants / Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. Few were observed in Jardines del Rey archipelago.

Double-crested Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax auritus*. Common in Jardines del Rey archipelago.

Pelicans / Pelecanidae

American White Pelican. *Pelecanus erythrorhynchus*. Photo record by Warren near Soplillar.

Brown Pelican. *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Seen almost daily.

Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns / Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron. *Ardea herodias*. Common in Cayo Coco and other keys. We observed 2 individuals in white morph.

Great Egret. *Ardea alba*. Seen in various wetlands.

Snowy Egret. *Egretta thula*. Seen in various wetlands.

Little Blue Heron. *Egretta caerulea*. Seen in Cayo Coco and the shrimp farm.

Tricolored Heron. *Egretta tricolor*. Cayo Coco.

Reddish Egret. *Egretta rufescens*. A couple of white morph individual were observed near Cayo Paredón Grande.

Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. Seen daily.

Green Heron. *Butorides virescens*. Cayo Coco.

Ibises and Spoonbills / Threskiornithidae

White Ibis. *Eudocimus albus*. Cayo Coco is named after this species (locally called coco). Various pairs were seen in Cayo Coco and the neighboring keys.

Glossy Ibis. *Plegadis falcinellus*. Seen near Cienfuegos.

Roseate Spoonbill. *Platalea ajaja*. Cayo Guillermo.

New World Vultures / Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. Seen daily.

Osprey / Pandionidae

Osprey. *Pandion haliaetus*. A single individual was seen in the shrimp farm near Soroa.

Hawks, Eagles and Kites / Accipitridae

Snail Kite. *Rosthramus sociabilis*. About 8 individuals were observed near Soroa. Several juveniles were observed.

Northern Harrier. *Circus cyaneus*. Seen in a farmland near Bermeja.

Gundlach's Hawk (E). *Accipiter gundlachi*. A single individual was observed by few participants flying very fast above the mangrove in the Ancon peninsula.

Cuban Black Hawk (E)(Common Black Hawk). *Buteogallus anthracinus*. Seen in Jardines del Rey. Specially common in Cayo Guillermo. Nowadays treated as a Cuban endemic, Cuban Black Hawk *Buteogallus gundlachii* by most taxonomists.

Broad-winged Hawk. *Buteo platypterus*. This is resident and widespread in the Antilles. One individual was seen in Viñales.

Red-tailed Hawk. *Buteo jamaicensis*. Cayo Coco, Parque El Cubano and Soroa.

Barn-Owls / Tytonidae

Barn Owl. *Tyto alba*. Seen a couple of times. We noticed its bright white plumage.

Owls / Strigidae

Bare-legged Owl (E). *Margarobyas lawrencii*. Seen in two separate nests.

Cuban Pygmy-Owl (E). *Glaucidium siju*. This endemic owl of Cuba was seen in La Belen and later nesting in Soplillar.

Stygian Owl. *Asio stygius*. We enjoyed superb views of a sub-adult individual near Soroa.

Trogons / Trogonidae

Cuban Trogon (E). *Priotelus temnurus*. This is Cuba's national bird. Pairs were seen almost daily. The term *Priotelus* (genus) means *an accomplished or complete saw* and refers to the rugged appearance of the tail feathers.

Todies / Todidae

Cuban Tody (E). *Todus multicolor*. Todies are unique birds. To me, they resemble a cartoon characters. The one in Cuba is the most colorful of all. It was seen in four days. Fossil evidence suggests that todies evolved from Central America but became extinct for unknown reasons. Five species remain in the Great Antilles. The todies are relatives of the motmots and more distantly to the kingfishers.

Kingfishers / Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher. *Megaceryle alcyon*. A single individual as observed beating a fish (prey).

Woodpeckers / Picidae

West Indian Woodpecker. *Melanerpes superciliaris*. Seen daily in the lowlands. This species is a relative of Red-bellied Woodpecker (of North America) and the Red-crowned Woodpecker (of South America). It is another West Indies specialty found in all the Greater Antilles.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. *Sphyrapicus varius*. Cayo Coco.

Cuban Green Woodpecker (E). *Xiphidiopicus percussus*. This was one of the tour participant favorites. We saw it three times!

Northern Flicker. *Colaptes auratus*. Las Terrazas.

Fernandina's Flicker (E). *Colaptes fernandinae*. We observed two nesting pairs in the Zapata peninsula, near Bermeja.

Falcons and Caracaras / Falconidae

Crested Caracara. *Caracara cheriway*. Seen in Cayo Coco and the Zapata Peninsula.

American Kestrel. *Falco sparverius*. This common and widespread species was seen everyday. The pale subspecies found in Cuba is *sparveroides*. And we observed two morphs, the pale and the rufous one.

Parrots / Psittacidae

Cuban Parakeet (E). *Aratinga euops*. Three groups were observed in various locations. We noticed its similarities with Scarlet-fronted, White-eyed and Hispaniola's parakeets. These species may be closely related one to another.

Cuban Parrot. *Amazona leucocephala*. Six individuals were seen in La Belen and six other in Bermeja. Sometimes considered conspecific with other parrot species in the Caribbean.

Tyrant Flycatchers / Tyrannidae

Cuban Pewee (E). *Contopus caribaeus*. We saw it almost everyday.

La Sagra's Flycatcher. *Myiarchus sagrae*. The genus *Myiarchus* comprises similar and hard-to-tell-apart species, and is distributed from southern USA to Argentina. In Cuba there's only one option, so its identification is pretty straightforward. We came across various pairs of La Sagra's Flycatcher. By the way, its common (and specific) name is after Ramón de La Sagra (1801-1871), a Cuban writer and naturalist. He authored *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, in 1837.

Eastern Kingbird. *Tyrannus tyrannus*. Reported by one tour participant in Viñales.

Loggerhead Kingbird. *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*. This species was observed in daily basis.

Giant Kingbird (E). *Tyrannus cubensis*. Nice studies of a pair in Rancho la Belen. This species is threatened and apparently due to lost of habitat. More studies needed.

Vireos / Vireonidae

Thick-billed Vireo. *Vireo crassirostris*. A single individual was observed in Cayo Paredón Grande. The subspecies *cubensis* is restricted to this part of Cuba.

Cuban Vireo (E). *Vireo gundlachii*. Seen well in various locations. Quite vocal!

Black-whiskered Vireo. *Vireo altiloquus*. Heard in various locations. It was seen in Parque El Cubano.

Crows, Jays and Magpies / Corvidae

Palm Crow. *Corvus palmarum*. Nice studies of about 6 individuals in Rancho La Belén. It is found in large tracks of royal palm contiguous to forested areas.

Cuban Crow. *Corvus nasicus*. Few pairs were seen in Rancho La Belén. We noticed its loud voice.

Swallows / Hirundinidae

Cuban Martin. *Progne cryptoleuca*. Observed in El Cubano and Old Havana.

Tree Swallow. *Tachycineta bicolor*. Flocks were observed apparently migrating.

Bank Swallow. *Riparia riparia*. A dozen individuals were observed in Playa Girón.

Cave Swallow. *Petrochelidon fulva*. Common in Trinidad.

Barn Swallow. *Hirundo rustica*. Lee reported to see it in Playa Girón.

Wrens / Troglodytidae

Zapata Wren (E). *Ferminia cerveraei*. We observed this species singing in front of us in the Santo Tomás area of the Zapata marsh. This is the only member of its genus and both, the genus and specific name are taken from the persona that apparently first collected it, Fermín Cervera.

Gnatcatchers / Polioptilidae

Cuban Gnatcatcher (E). *Polioptila lembeyei*. A pair was observed in Cayo Paredón Grande.

Thrushes and Allies / Turdidae

Cuban Solitaire (E). *Myadestes elisabeth*. I think everyone agreed that seeing this bird was not as spectacular as it was hearing it. The specific name *elisabeth* was given after Queen Isabel I of Castile and Spain (1451-1504). It will remain as a mystery why the person that described this species (Lembeye) used the English equivalent (*Elisabeth*) rather than the Spanish name (*Isabel*). We enjoyed views of three individuals in the Mogotes of Viñales.

Red-legged Thrush. *Turdus plumbeus*. Another gorgeous species found in the Greater Antilles. We saw it in every location visited during this tour. Both subspecies found in Cuba have a nice dark orange belly (*schistaceus* & *rubripes*).

Mockingbirds and Thrashers / Mimidae

Gray Catbird. *Dumetella carolinensis*. Seen in bushy habitats in various locations.

Bahama Mockingbird. *Mimus gundlachii*. IF it wasn't for Odey's perseverance and capacity to find it we would have miss this species. After much effort we saw it in Cayo Paredón Grande.

Northern Mockingbird. *Mimus polyglottos*. Common. Seen daily.

Old World Sparrows / Passeridae

House Sparrow. *Passer domesticus*. Common in urban areas.

New World Warblers / Parulidae

Ovenbird. *Seiurus aurocapilla*. Seen in Bermeja and Restaurant El Divino.

Louisiana Waterthrush. *Parkesia motacilla*. Cayo Coco. A Boreal migrant.

Black-and-white Warbler. *Mniotilta varia*. Parque El Cubano.

Swainson's Warbler. *Limnothlypis swainsonii*. Nice views by some tour participants in Bermeja.

Common Yellowthroat. *Geothlypis formosa*. Seen several times.

American Redstart. *Setophaga ruticilla*. A common Neotropical migrant in Cuba.

Cape May Warbler. *Setophaga tigrina*. Seen only once.

Northern Parula. *Setophaga americana*. Seen in open country and gardens in urban areas.

Yellow Warbler. *Setophaga petechia*. Cayo Coco.

Black-throated Blue Warbler. *Setophaga caerulescens*. Seen twice in Cayo Coco and Parque El Cubano.

Palm Warbler. *Setophaga palmarum*. This species is among the commonest Neotropical migrants in Cuba. It was found in edge of forest, scrubby vegetation and gardens.

Olive-capped Warbler. *Setophaga pityophila*. Another specialty of the Greater Antilles. This species is only found in N Bahamas, W and E of Cuba. We enjoyed views of a pair near Viñales.

Yellow-throated Warbler. *Setophaga dominica*. Parque El Cubano.

Prairie Warbler. *Setophaga discolor*. About six individuals were observed in jardines del Rey archipelago. Seen also in Parque El Cubano.

Black-throated Green Warbler. *Setophaga virens*. A single individual in breeding plumage was observed near Viñales.

Yellow-headed Warbler (E). *Teretistris fernandinae*. A pair was observed in Bermeja and another pair in Viñales.

Oriente Warbler (E). *Teretistris fornsi*. Fairly common in Cayo Coco and Cayo Paredón Grande.

Tanagers and Allies / Thraupidae

Red-legged Honeycreeper. *Cyanerpes cyaneus*. Nice views of a group near Las Terrazas.

Cuban Grassquit (E). *Tiaris canorus*. We owe a big thank you to our guide of Las Terrazas for taking us to the best site for this species where we got to see more than 30 individuals!

Yellow-faced Grassquit. *Tiaris olivaceus*. A common species seen in most locations.

Cuban Bullfinch. *Melopyrrha nigra*. Seen mainly in forest edge in various locations.

Genera INCERTAE SEDIS

Western Spindalis. *Spindalis zena*. The spindalis are endemic to the Greater Antilles. Some taxonomists consider them to be part of the cardinals rather than to the tanagers. This lovely species was observed in Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Cayo Paredón Grande as well as Viñales and Las Terrazas.

Buntings, Sparrows and Allies / Emberizidae

Zapata Sparrow (E). *Torreornis inexpectata*. We enjoyed nice studies of a pair in Cayo Coco. The subspecies found there was *varonai* (this subspecies was described in 1981).

Cardinals and Allies / Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager. *Piranga rubra*. A male was seen near Soroa.

Troupials and Allies / Icteridae

Red-shouldered Blackbird (E). *Agelaius assimilis*. We enjoyed superb views of three individuals near Bermeja, in the Zapata Peninsula.

Tawny-shouldered Blackbird. *Agelaius humeralis*. A common species in lowlands in Cuba.

Eastern Meadowlark. *Sturnella magna*. Observed in Rancho La Belen and along the road to the Ancon peninsula.

Cuban Blackbird (E). *Dives atrovioleaceus*. Observed in various locations. Sometimes treated as *Ptiloxena atrovioleacea*. It was originally described as a grackle in 1892.

Greater Antillean Grackle. *Quiscalus niger*. This species is widespread and tolerates human presence, like other grackles of the genus. It was seen everyday.

Cuban Oriole. *Icterus melanopsis*. We came across this species in three locations. The population found in Cuba was believe to be conspecific with the populations in Central America and the Caribbean. Nowadays it is accepted as an endemic species of Cuba.

OTHER SPECIES LIST

REPTILES

Allison's (Blue-headed) Anole. *Anolis allisoni*.

Knight Anole. *Anolis equestris*. Topes del Collante.

Tropical House Gecko. *Hemidactylus mabouia*. Introduced from Africa.

AMPHIBIANS

Bull Frog. *Lithobates catesbeiana*.

OTHER SPECIES

Barracuda. *Sphyraena sp.*

Arboreal termites. (Nasutitermes).

Leaf-cutter Ant. *Atta insularis*.

Cuban Snail. *Polymita sp.*

Dragonfly.

Sea Urchin.

Jellyfish.