

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

CUBA

March 14-25, 2017



Cuban Grassquit, *Tiaris canorus*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

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Once the plane touched the tarmac of the Camaguey airport we experienced an eloquent hand clapping that followed the scratching of the plane tires (part of the Cuban culture) and soon after it stopped in front of the terminal we were descending the stairway to feel the iconic Caribbean breeze with warm air blowing in our faces. Welcome to Cuba!

From the first day we submerged ourselves into a country so different to any other that each day turned out to be better or radically different than the previous one. Add to it great camaraderie, lots of fun, great music with dancing opportunities combined with field trips that helped everyone to absorb much of the Cuba's culture and – at the same time – enjoy superb views of all the possible Cuban endemic birds and several regional specialties (except for the Goundlach's Hawk that was seen only briefly in flight).



The first morning we took a drive from the picturesque city of Camaguey to Najasa and further east to Rancho La Belen. Both locations gave us the opportunity to see our first Cuban Parrot (near threatened) and Cuban Parakeet (vulnerable). We also saw Cuban Palm Crow (near threatened) and the unmistakable Giant Kingbird (endangered). As we enjoyed these birds we learned about the research conducted by Camilo, the local expert who's preparing a manuscript highlighting unknown

ecological aspects of the breeding behavior of the Giant Kingbird. Another target species was the Plain Pigeon (near-threatened), one that we saw at close distance.

The tour continued with an afternoon drive to Jardines del Rey archipelago. The greenish-aquamarine beaches of Cayo Coco hosted a new assortment of endemic birds. In the deciduous and semi-deciduous forest we found a secretive pair of Zapata Sparrow and in scrubby vegetation we nailed the active Cuban Gnatcatcher. Also, our first sight of the Cuban Emerald was along the road to Cayo Paredón Grande. In the afternoon we spent time identifying waders and photographing the elegantly dressed American Flamingo. Our following morning in Cayo Coco found us at crack of dawn in *Cueva de los Jabalies* where we happened to see an unbelievable 24 individuals of Key West Quail-Dove (I know that we had to be there to believe it!). Another awkward experience was to see (as in the previous year) a pair of Clapper Rail swimming across a mangrove-edged channel. Yet, one of the most memorable moments that morning was having the comical and unique Cuban Tody virtually singing in front of our face.



From Cayo Coco we took the road south, to the Caribbean side of the island. The Ancon peninsula was a location with mangroves and brackish water wetlands. Here, a nice mix of waders was observed allowing detailed studies of their field marks. Among the species seen by everyone were Spotted and Solitary sandpipers, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Willet and the unique Wilson's Plover guarding a potential nesting site. Larger waterbirds gave also a nice show and that included 8 species of *Ardeidae* (egrets and herons) as well as White and Glossy ibises along with Roseate Spoonbill. A unique experience was to see more than a dozen Black-necked Stilt together with near a dozen American Avocet, the latter being an uncommon species in Cuba.

From the Ancon peninsula we drove further west, to the famous Zapata peninsula where the Zapata national park and biosphere reserve are located. This area also is home for the largest wetland in the Caribbean, the Zapata swamp. Here we met Orlando, a ranger that explained the restoration process of the flora and fauna in Bermeja. He had come with an idea to attract one of the most difficult-to-see birds in Cuba: the Blue-headed Quail-Dove. To put things in perspective let me explain that back in time when there wasn't a blind and Orlando wasn't feeding the quail-doves it was only a matter of luck to see any of it. And, if you happened to get a flash view of any species of quail-dove you would sing victory! Now that you know how difficult it can be to see these members of the *Columbidae* let me remind you what we saw. Are you ready? In a couple of hours in Bermeja we nailed 4 species of quail-doves and these were Blue-headed, Ruddy, Gray-fronted and Key West. Wow! And, as a bonus we ended the morning seeing the smallest bird in the planet, the Bee Hummingbird (near-threatened). Does it get any better than this? You bet we continued to keep batting well.

From the Zapata peninsula we drove all the way to the west side of the island, to Soroa. Here, the landscape surrounding the hotel was considered among the favorite of the tour. A morning in Viñales and its famous *Mogotes* gave us another endemic bird, The Cuban Solitaire. With this beautiful landscape we enjoyed the best lunch of all in the *Finca Ecológica* and later we visited a tobacco farm.



Our last day in the field and prior to our return to *La Habana* (Spanish way of Havana) was spent in the sustainable community of Las Terrazas where a wonderful coffee, great artists and superb views of the Cuban Grassquit. Having to see the grassquit rounded up a successful birding part of the tour.

Our people-to-people tour to Cuba concluded with a full day in the streets of Old Havana where we absorbed a different angle of Cuba among great architecture, amazing people, wonderful old American cars and a very rich history.



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!



Map of locations

IE / VENT Cuba People-to-People Tour

March 14-25, 2017

Prepared by David Ascanio

VENT CUBA 3, 2017

February March 14-25, 2017

Leader: David Ascanio.

ITINERARY

14 March. Miami.

15 March. Flight to Camaguey.

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

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

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

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

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

21 March. Santo Tomas, Havana & Soroa.

22 March. Viñales.

23 March. Las Terrazas & Havana.

24 March. Old Havana.

25 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/72157683761073776>

Waterfowl / Anatidae

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

Northern Shoveler. *Anas clypeata*. Cayo Coco.

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

Red-breasted Merganser. *Mergus serrator*. Seen at side of 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.

Pigeons and Doves / Columbidae

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

Scaly-naped Pigeon. *Patagioenas squamosa*. Seen only in flight along the road to Las Terrazas.

White-crowned Pigeon. *Patagioenas leucocephala*. Zapata peninsula and 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. Seen everyday.

Blue-headed Quail-Dove (E). *Starnoenas cyanocephala*. One of the favorite species! Two individuals were seen at a stakeout site in Bermejas. A BIG thanks to Orlando for this.

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*. 24 individuals were seen in Cayo Coco. A new tour record only close to the Cuba 2 tour! Adding the individuals seen in Bermeja we nailed 27 individuals.

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 and widespread in open areas.

Cuckoos / Cuculidae

Great Lizard-Cuckoo. *Coccyzus merlini*. Lizard-cuckoos are amazing birds. Not only because of their extravagant size and behavior but for their voice. We enjoyed views in the Zapata peninsula 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*. We enjoyed great views of a male in Cayo Coco and later, another male in the Zapata peninsula. We got superb photos of it.

Swifts / Apodidae

White-collared Swift. *Streptoprocne zonaris*. Seen flying above the road near Cienfuegos.

Antillean Palm-Swift. *Tachornis phoenicobia*. Seen frequently in lowland open habitats. A common species in Cienfuegos botanical gardens.

Hummingbirds / Trochilidae

Bee Hummingbird (E). *Mellisuga helenae*. We saw five individuals in two locations, Bermeja and Palpite. This is THE smallest bird in the world and only slightly larger than the Vervain Hummingbird, found in Hispaniola.

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

Rails, Gallinules and Coots / Rallidae

Clapper Rail. *Rallus crepitans*. Cayo Coco. A single individual swimming! Later, we saw a pair in the Ancon peninsula.

Common Gallinule. *Gallinula galeata*. Road near Moron and Las Terrazas.

Limpkin / Aramididae

Limpkin. *Aramus guarauna*. One individual was seen at the entrance of the Cienfuegos botanical gardens.

Stilts and Avocets / Recurvirostridae

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

American Avocet. *Recurvirostra americana*. We saw half a dozen individuals in the Ancon peninsula.

Plovers and Lapwings / Charadriidae

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

Wilson's Plover. *Charadrius wilsonia*. Three pairs were behaving very territorial in the beaches of a wetland near the Ancon peninsula. They were probably getting close to nest.

Semipalmated Plover. *Charadrius semipalmatus*. A pair in Cayo Coco.

Killdeer. *Charadrius vociferous*. Seen in several locations.

Sandpipers and Allies / Scolopacidae

Ruddy Turnstone. *Arenaria interpres*. Two individuals were observed in Cayo Coco.

Red Knot. *Calidris canutus*. About three individuals were seen throughout the scope foraging with several short-billed dowitchers. Cayo Guillermo.

Short-billed Dowitcher. *Limnodromus griseus*. More than two hundred individuals were observed (and photograph) in Cayo Guillermo.

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularia*. Ancon peninsula and rice fields on route to the Zapata peninsula.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. Rice fields. Road to the Zapata peninsula.

Greater Yellowlegs. *Tringa melanoleuca*. 25+ ind in Ancon peninsula.

Willet. *Tringa semipalmata*. Various individuals were observed in Cayo Coco and the Ancon peninsula.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes*. Ancon peninsula.

Gulls, Terns and Skimmers / Laridae

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

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

Caspian Tern. *Hydroprogne caspia*. Shrimp farm near Soroa.

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

Frigatebirds / Fregatidae

Magnificent Frigatebird. *Fregata magnificens*. Jardines del Rey archipelago and Ancon peninsula.

Cormorants / Phalacrocoracidae

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

Anhinga / Anhingidae

Anhinga. *Anhinga anhinga*. Only two individuals, one on each location: Cayo Coco and Ancon peninsula.

Pelicans / Pelecanidae

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

Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns / Ardeidae

Least Bittern. *Ixobrychus exilis*. Seen by Glenda, Ben and Kathy on 21st March.

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

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

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

Little Blue Heron. *Egretta caerulea*. Found in Cayo Coco, Las Terrazas and the shrimp farm.

Tricolored Heron. *Egretta tricolor*. Cayo Coco.

Reddish Egret. *Egretta rufescens*. White morph individual were in Cayo Paredón Grande, Cayo Guillermo and the Ancon peninsula. Individuals in regular plumage were also observed.

Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. Seen daily.

Green Heron. *Butorides virescens*. Cayo Coco, rice fields and Las Terrazas.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. *Nyctanassa violacea*. About a dozen were found in Parque El Cubano including some nesting.

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 in the Ancon peninsula.

Glossy Ibis. *Plegadis falcinellus*. Rice fields and shrimp farm near Soroa.

Roseate Spoonbill. *Platalea ajaja*. 12+ individuals. Ancon peninsula.

New World Vultures / Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. Seen daily. Ben highlighted the potential of Cuba in the *Cathartidae* conservation international context given the threat that several species face in Africa. It is a numerous species in Cuba.

Osprey / Pandionidae

Osprey. *Pandion haliaetus*. First seen in Cayo Coco and later in the shrimp farm near Soroa.

Hawks, Eagles and Kites / Accipitridae

Snail Kite. *Rostrhamus sociabilis*. About 5 individuals were observed near Soroa. Some juveniles were observed.

Gundlach's Hawk (E). *Accipiter gundlachi*. A single individual was observed by few participants flying very fast above the mangroves in the Ancon peninsula. Also heard near Las Terrazas.

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

Broad-winged Hawk. *Buteo platypterus*. This is resident and widespread in the Antilles. One individual was seen along the road to Las Terrazas.

Red-tailed Hawk. *Buteo jamaicensis*. Soroa. Steve saw a dark morph individual.

Barn-Owls / Tytonidae

Barn Owl. *Tyto alba*. Heard in Soroa.

Owls / Strigidae

Bare-legged Owl (E). *Margarobyas lawrencii*. Two individuals were observed in nests located in Bermejas and further east of the Zapata peninsula.

Cuban Pygmy-Owl (E). *Glaucidium siju*. This endemic owl of Cuba was seen in Parque El Cubano.

Stygian Owl. *Asio stygius*. We enjoyed superb views of an adult and a juvenile in Cienfuegos. We owe a BIG thank you to Angel for finding this nest.

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 Cueva de los Jabalies. 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*. Causeway to Jardines del Rey. Also seen in the shrimp farm.

Woodpeckers / Picidae

West Indian Woodpecker. *Melanerpes superciliosus*. 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 four times!

Northern Flicker. *Colaptes auratus*. Cayo Coco and other keys.

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

Falcons and Caracaras / Falconidae

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

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.

Merlin. *Falco columbarius*. A single individual was seen in Trinidad.

Peregrine Falcon. *Falco peregrinus*. One was seen by Pamela in Old Havana.

Parrots / Psittacidae

Cuban Parakeet (E). *Aratinga euops*. Groups were observed in various locations. Nice studies in Bermeja. 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*. Two individuals were seen in La Belen and 20+ other in the Zapata peninsula. Previously considered conspecific with another 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.

Gray Kingbird. *Tyrannus dominicensis*. Various pairs were observed. NOT seen in the previous Cuba tour just a week behind. These are local migrants and were just arriving for the breeding season.

Loggerhead Kingbird. *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*. Observed everyday. Similar to the previous one but plumage contrasts in head are bolder.

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. Further studies needed (Camilo, our local guide is currently studying the breeding biology of this species).

Vireos / Vireonidae

Thick-billed Vireo. *Vireo crassirostris*. Two pairs were 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 the second half of the tour.

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*. Found in Rancho La Belén. It was also seen in the Zapata peninsula and in Soroa. We noticed its loud voice.

Swallows / Hirundinidae

Cuban Martin. *Progne cryptoleuca*. Observed in Cayo Coco, Trinidad and Viñales.

Tree Swallow. *Tachycineta bicolor*. Common in Trinidad.

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

Cliff Swallow. *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*. Common in Trinidad and the Ancon peninsula.

Barn Swallow. *Hirundo rustica*. Trinidad & Ancon peninsula.

Wrens / Troglodytidae

Zapata Wren (E). *Ferminia cerveraei*. We observed this species singing some 10 feet from us! 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. ENDANGERED.

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 habitat at 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 Guillermo (and a big thank you to Angel for finding this individual!).

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

Waxbills and allies / Estrildidae

Nutmeg Mannikin or Scaly-breasted Munia. *Lonchura punctulata*. 50+ were seen feeding in a seeding exotic bamboo in Cienfuegos.

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.

Worm-eating Warbler. *Helmitheros vermivorum*. Bermeja, Zapata peninsula.

Louisiana Waterthrush. *Parkesia motacilla*. Las Terrazas. A Boreal migrant.

Northern Waterthrush. *Parkesia noveboracensis*. Palpite, Zapata peninsula.

Black-and-white Warbler. *Mniotilta varia*. Jardines del Rey archipelago and Soroa.

Swainson's Warbler. *Limnothlypis swainsonii*. Nice views in Soplillar.

Common Yellowthroat. *Geothlypis formosa*. Seen frequently near wetlands.

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

Cape May Warbler. *Setophaga tigrina*. Seen in the first half of the tour.

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*. A common Boreal migrant seen almost every day.

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 two pairs near Viñales.

Pine Warbler. *Setophaga pinus*. Called by Pamela, Katy and Glenda in Cueva de los Jabalíes.

Yellow-rumped Warbler. *Setophaga coronata*. Cayo Paredón Grande.

Yellow-throated Warbler. *Setophaga dominica*. LA Belen and Río Azul.

Prairie Warbler. *Setophaga discolor*. La Belen.

Black-throated Green Warbler. *Setophaga virens*. Seen by Kathie, Frank and Steve in the last day of the tour.

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

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 pair in Viñales.

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 12 individuals!

Yellow-faced Grassquit. *Tiaris olivaceus*. This is a common species that was seen in most locations.

Cuban Bullfinch. *Melopyrrha nigra*. NEAR THREATENED. Seen mainly in forest edge in various locations. Extensively trapped for use in bird sound contest.

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 Las Terrazas.

Buntings, Sparrows and Allies / Emberizidae

Zapata Sparrow (E). *Torreornis inexpectata*. ENDANGERED, We enjoyed nice studies of a pair in Cayo Coco. The first subspecies seen was *varonai* (this subspecies was described in 1981) in Cayo Coco and the second one was *inexpectata*, seen in the Zapata swamp.

Cardinals and Allies / Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager. *Piranga rubra*. It was seen in Bermeja and in Soroa.

Troupials and Allies / Icteridae

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

Tawny-shouldered Blackbird. *Agelaius humeralis*. A common lowland species in open habitats.

Cuban Blackbird (E). *Dives atroviolaceus*. Observed at various locations. Sometimes treated as *Ptiloxena atroviolacea*. 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.

Shiny Cowbird. *Molothrus bonairensis*. Las Terrazas.

Cuban Oriole. *Icterus melanopsis*. We came across this species in three locations. The population found in Cuba was believed 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

MAMMALS

Cuban Greater Funnel-eared Bat. *Chilonatalus micropus*. Cueva de los Jabalíes.

Big Brown Bat. *Eptesicus fuscus*. Cueva de los Jabalíes.

REPTILES

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

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

OTHER SPECIES

Arboreal termites. (Nasutitermes).

Cuban Snail. *Polymita sp.*

Dragonfly.

Jellyfish.