PUERTO RICO
(Extension to the Dominican Republic tour)
April 16-20, 2011

Leader:
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The following birdlist was prepared to those participants of the Puerto Rico extension. Unlike the previous years this time we were based at Copamarina Beach Resort for the whole 5 days, and from there we took daily drives to the different birding sites.

Our first full day in the island found us at the Maricao highlands where Elfin Woods Warbler, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Puerto Rican Emerald and Green Mango were observed nicely. At the following day the Guanica forest and La Parguera were our locations, and from there we saw Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Puerto Rican Tody and the threatened Yellow-shouldered Blackbird. Furthermore, in the night of the 18th we matched the success of the morning when having astonishing views of Puerto Rican Nightjar and Puerto Rican Screech-Owl, being both species our last yet-to-see endemic of the island. Well, except for an almost-impossible-to-see: The Puerto Rican Parrot.

Since we had a full day to go and all the other endemic species were already nailed we decided to give a try for the parrot. Romney was a key person in pursuing for it since she knew about the main locations and the recent sights. Therefore, on April 19th we started very early in the morning and took a drive to Rio Abajo. Once there we walked the trails and to the surroundings of the aviary. We waited, and waited in hoped for the impossible, and the impossible happened at noon: after hearing squacking voices at the other side of the gate a single Puerto Rican Parrot flew into a bare tree close to us and gave us enough time to enjoy it throughout the scope, then flew away. Only 30 minutes later a second pair landed and this time allowed us to take a video that has been posted at the Internet Bird Collection (you can see it by clicking the species at hyperlink file). What a moment! This is what I would call an experience for life. When we started the tour this bird was a dream, an impossible dream I would say, and only few days later it was a reality, and a lifer for
your leader! I hope you will remember this moment as one of the very special birding experiences of the year. By seeing this parrot I can now say that we had seen all the endemics of the small but beautiful Puerto Rico!

Thank you very much for joining me in this short but very special tour. I look forward to seeing you again in another adventure in the tropics of America.

The Birdlist.
The enclosed birdlist follows the AOU taxonomy. Alternative names or taxonomic treatment from other sources is given in the comment accompanying the species.

**Fregatidae**

- **Magnificent Frigatebird.** *Fregata magnificens* (*monotypic*). Common around Copa Marina.

**Pelecanidae**

- **Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*. Few individuals were seen in La Parguera.

**Ardeidae**

- **Great Egret.** *Ardea alba egretta*. Several individuals were seen on grasslands along the highway to Guanica.
- **Little Blue Heron.** *Egretta caerulea* (*monotypic*). A single individual was observed in Copa Marina.
- **Cattle Egret.** *Bubulcus ibis ibis*. Common at sides of the highways. It was seen every day.
- **Green Heron.** *Butorides virescens maculata*. A single individual was seen at the beach in Copamarina.

**Cathartidae**

- **Turkey Vulture.** *Cathartes aura aura*. This species was seen every day. Notice that the race of the island has red nape.

**Accipitridae**

- **Sharp-shinned Hawk.** *Accipiter striatus*. We enjoyed great views of a single individual in Maricao.
- **Red-tailed Hawk.** *Buteo jamaicensis*. This species is fairly common in Puerto Rico. We observed it along the highway and later near Guanica.

**Falconidae**

- **American Kestrel.** *Falco sparverius caribaearum*. A single individual was observed chasing a Red-tailed Hawk.

**Rallidae**

- **Clapper Rail.** *Rallus longirostris caribaeus*. A pair was found foraging in the open inside a very small wetland.

**Charadriidae**
Wilson’s Plover. *Charadrius wilsonia rufinucha*. 1 individual was found in the wetland near La Parguera. The race *rufinucha* is resident of the Greater Antilles and some of the Lesser Antilles.

Semipalmated Plover. *Charadrius semipalmatus (monotypic)*. 10+ individuals accompanied the previous species in the mudflat near La Parguera.

Black-bellied Plover. *Pluvialis squatarola*. 3 individuals were observed in the wetland near La Parguera.

*Scolopacidae*

Nine sandpipers were seen in the wetland near La Parguera while the Willet was observed along the beach.

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularia (monotypic)*. One individual.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes (monotypic)*. Three individuals.

Least Sandpiper. *Calidris minutilla (monotypic)*. Three individuals.

Semipalmated Sandpiper. *Calidris pusilla (monotypic)*. About 30 individuals.

Western Sandpiper. *Calidris mauri*. At least 6 individuals.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. A single individual was observed walking in the dry area of the mangrove.

Stilt Sandpiper. *Calidris himantopus*. 3 individuals in breeding plumage.

Sanderling. *Calidris alba*. 3 individuals.

Short-billed Dowitcher. *Limnodromus griseus*. 11 individuals, including a leucistic one!

Willet. *Tringa semipalmata*. 1 individual at the beach in front of La Parguera.

*Recurvirostridae*

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus (monotypic)*. Common and numerous around La Parguera.

*Laridae*

Sandwich Tern. *Sterna sandvicensis*. 3 individuals were seen beyond the wetland near La Parguera, and another three individuals were enjoyed in Rio Portugues, near Ponce.

*Columbidae*

Scaly-naped Pigeon. *Patagioenas squamosa (monotypic)*. Seen daily.

White-winged Dove. *Zenaida asiatica asiatica*. This is probably the most widespread *Columbidae* in Puerto Rico. We saw it every day.

Zenaida Dove. *Zenaida aurita zenaida*. About seven individuals were seen in the desert scrub of the Guánica forest. This species has a preference for drier habitats.

Mourning Dove. *Zenaida macroura macroura*. This species was common near San Juan.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina portoricensis*. We had sporadic views of this small *Columbidae* throughout the dry areas of the island.
Key West Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon chrysa* (monotypic). Despite much search in their Susua forest this species goes as heard-only! Nevertheless, the individual flushed in Maricao might have been this species.

Ruddy Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon montana montana*. One individual was observed throughout the scope at the Rio Abajo forest.

**Psittacidae**

Puerto Rican Parrot. *Amazona vittata*. A single individual was seen first, and later a pair was even scoped in Rio Abajo forest. This is the most threatened parrot in the Caribbean since in the year 2006 the total wild population was estimated in 40 individuals. Today’s effort to conserve the species has expanded to Rio Abajo forest where individuals have been reintroduced. Our sighting is probably the first in many years for any tour group.

**Cuculidae**


Mangrove Cuckoo. *Coccyzus minor*. 1 individual was seen in La Parguera.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Chrotophaga ani*. Mostly seen along the highways.

**Strigidae**

Puerto Rican Screech-Owl. *Megascops nudipes nudipes*. Endemic to Puerto Rico. What a view! We had VERY close vies of an individual in Guanica. Probably amont the top five of the tour.

**Caprimulgidae**

Antillean Nighthawk. *Chordeiles gundlachii* (monotypic). About three individuals were seen giving aerial display on the grounds above the Guanica forest.

Puerto Rican Nightjar. *Caprimulgus noctitherus* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. We were extremely lucky this time to see an individual perched and later to have another individual flying very close to us. In one evening we heard about 8 individuals!

**Trochilidae**

Antillean Mango. *Anthracothorax dominicus aurulentus*. This species was seen twice near Copa Marina.

Green Mango. *Anthracothorax viridis* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. Common in the Maricao highlands. We reported 5 individuals in one morning.

Puerto Rican Emerald. *Chlorostilbon maugaeus* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. The first encounter with this species was at the Maricao highlands. Also, a female was seen in Susua forest.

**Todidae**

Fossil evidence suggests that todies evolved from Central America but became extinct for unknown reasons. Five species remain in the Great
Antilles and one is represented in Puerto Rico. Todies are relatives of the motmots, and more distantly to the kingfishers.

**Puerto Rican Tody.** *Todus mexicanus (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico.** What a little beauty. We enjoy several encounters with this very unique species. Look at the hyperlink document to enjoy some video of it!

**Picidae**

**Puerto Rican Woodpecker.** *Melanerpes portoricensis (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico.** Mainly heard in Susua forest and later seen very well in Rio Abajo.

**Tyrannidae**

**Caribbean Elaenia.** *Elaenia martinica martinica.* A pair was observed in Guanica. The genus *Elaenia* is known for the similarity of the species. In bird-rich countries the voice and the habitat are relevant for species identification.

**Lesser Antillean Pewee.** *Contopus latirostris portoricensis.* (Puerto Rican Pewee. *Contopus portoricensis*). Treated by some taxonomist as an **Puerto Rico endemic** (*Contopus portoricensis*). A pair single individual was seen in Susua forest and later seen well in Rio Abajo.

**Puerto Rican Flycatcher.** *Myiarchus antillarum (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico.** After a bit of search we found a pair in the Susua forest.

**Gray Kingbird.** *Tyrannus dominicensis dominicensis.* This one was common and widespread throughout the island. Notice that the bill is not as heavy as the ones found in the Lesser Antilles.

**Loggerhead Kingbird.** *Tyrannus caudifasciatus taylori.* Three pairs were observed in Rio Abajo. This species has a resemblance with Gray Kingbird but the voice is clearly distinct.

**Vireonidae**

**Puerto Rican Vireo.** *Vireo latimeri (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico.** We had a pair in the Maricao highlands. After a bit of a search we found this pair calling softly near the entrance of the forest.

**Black-whiskered Vireo.** *Vireo altiloquus altiloquus.* This species proved to be common and widespread in the dry forest around Guánica and in San Juan.

**Hirundinidae**

**Caribbean Martin.** *Progne dominicensis dominicensis.* Several individuals were seen at the San Juan airport.

**Cave Swallow.** *Petrochelidon fulva.* Few individuals were seen near San Juan.

**Turdidae**

**Red-legged Thrush.** *Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus.* Common in forested areas in both the highlands and the lowlands.

**Mimidae**
Northern Mockingbird. *Mimus polyglottos orpheus*. This species was common and widespread in non forested areas. It was seen every day.

Pearly-eyed Thrasher. *Margarops fuscatus fuscatus*. What a loud voice for a bird! Also, it is tolerant to human presence. It seen every day at Copa Marina.

**Parulidae**

Yellow Warbler. *Dendroica petechia*. A single individual was seen in La Parguera.

Adelaide’s Warbler. *Dendroica adelaia* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. We enjoyed various pairs in Guanica and Susua. The individuals found in the island of St. Lucia are rewarded today as a separate species.

Elfin-Woods Warbler. *Dendroica angelae* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. I believe this might have been the first endemic species we saw in Maricao, and a what a way to see it! One individual was enjoyed in the top of an isolated tree near the entrance of the forest.

Black-throated Blue-Warbler. *Dendroica caerulescens*. A Single individual was seen in the Rio Abajo reserve.

American Redstart. *Setophaga ruticilla*. One individual in Susua forest.

**Genus incerta sedis**

Bananaquit. *Coereba flaveola*. Common and widespread in forest edge, secondary growth and urban areas. This species was seen every day. The individuals found in Puerto Rico seems to have a repertoire similar to that of the populations in Central America.

**Thraupidae**

Puerto Rican Tanager. *Nesospingus speculiferus* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. More than 20 individuals were enjoyed in the Maricao Highlands. This species moves in small groups proving fruits and feeding on the infrutescence of the *Cecropia* trees. The genus *nesospingus* means a finch restricted to the island and gives reference to its unique distribution.

Puerto Rican Spindalis. *Spindalis portoricensis* (monotypic). Endemic to Puerto Rico. This is another *Thraupidae* that forages in groups. We enjoyed a small family-group of about six individuals feeding on berries at almost eye level. This species was named Stripe-headed Tanager previously.

**Emberizidae**

Yellow-faced Grassquit. *Tiaris olivaceus bryanti*. A single individual was seen in La Parguera. Not a common species in Puerto Rico.

Black-faced Grassquit. *Tiaris bicolor omissus*. Unlike the case in the Lesser Antilles, this is the common *Tiaris* in Puerto Rico. It was seen regularly in the lowlands.

Puerto Rican Bullfinch. *Loxigilla portoricensis portoricensis*. Endemic to Puerto Rico. Several pairs were seen in Mariaco, Susua and in Guanica. Common voice this time of the year.
**Icteridae**

**Yellow-shouldered Blackbird.** Agelaius xanthomus. **Endemic to Puerto Rico.** Amazing studies in La Parguera where we made nice studies of the foraging strategy of a small group. This species is threatened due to habitat loss.

**Greater Antillean Grackle.** Quiscalus niger brachypterus. Unlike the case in the Dominican Republic this species is numerous and widespread in Puerto Rico. I wonder if such contrast is related with the amount of opened areas (highways, parks, etc).

**Black-cowled Oriole(Greater Antillean Oriole).** Icterus dominicensis portoricensis. Several pairs were seen in Maricao, Susua and Rio Abajo.

**Fringillidae**

**Antillean Euphonia.** Euphonia musica sclateri. Heard in Maricao. The plumage of this species suggests an affinity with Golden-rumped Euphonia (E. cyanocephala) in South America. The Antillean Euphonia was formerly considered part of the Blue-hooded Euphonia superspecies that have been split into three species, one for Central America, one for the Antilles and another for South America.

**Introduced species.**

**Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon.** Columba livia. This one was common around urban areas.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove.** Streptopelia decaocto. More than 10 individuals were seen around La Parguera.

**Psittacidae**

**Canary-winged Parakeet.** Brotogeris versicolorus. 2 individuals were observed along the road near Sabana Grande.

**Passeridae**

**House Sparrow.** Passer domesticus. Common around La Parguera.

**Icteridae**

**Venezuelan Troupial.** Icterus icterus. Great views of various individuals near Copa Marina. This is the national bird of Venezuela!

**Amphibians, Reptiles and Mammals.**

**Bufonidae**

**Marine Toad.** Bufo marinus.

**Leptodactylidae**

**Common Coquí.** Eleutherodactylus coqui. This is one of the commonest frogs in Puerto Rico.

**Polychrotidae**

**Puerto Rican Crested Anole.** Anolis cristatellus.
**Herpestidae**

Small *Asian Mongoose*. *Herpestes javanicus*.

**Unidentified family**

Puerto Rican Flat Snail.

*Arboreal Termites*

**References.**
