

**Western Field Ornithologists' Cuba Trip (25 October – 7 November 2010)
With William Suarez and Jon L. Dunn**

Species List (1st number is number of days seen and 2nd number is the maximum number seen on a day). An H = heard only.

Blue-winged Teal <i>Anas discors</i>	1/200
Least Grebe <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	3/2
Brown Pelican <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	3/4
Neotropic Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	3/5
Double-crested Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	3/25
Anhinga <i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	1/1
Magnificent Frigatebird <i>Fregata magnificens</i>	2/2
Least Bittern <i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	2/2 H
Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea Herodias</i>	9/7
Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	9/17
Snowy Egret <i>Egretta thula</i>	10/20
Little Blue Heron <i>Egretta caerulea</i>	6/10
Tricolored Heron <i>Egretta tricolor</i>	2/5
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	12/500
Green Heron <i>Butorides virescens</i>	11/5
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron <i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	2/1
White Ibis <i>Eudocimus albus</i>	1/5
Roseate Spoonbill <i>Platalea ajaja</i>	1/1
Wood Stork <i>Mycteria americana</i>	1/1
Turkey Vulture <i>Cathartes aura</i>	12/400
American Flamingo <i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	1/45
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	5/7
Snail Kite <i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>	2/4
Northern Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	3/1
Sharp-shinned Hawk <i>Accipiter striatus</i>	2/1
Cuban Black-Hawk <i>Buteogallus gundlachii</i>	2/2
Broad-winged Hawk <i>Buteo platypterus cubanensis</i>	2/2
Red-tailed Hawk <i>Buteo jamaicensis solitudinis</i>	7/3
Clapper Rail <i>Rallus longirostris caribaeus</i>	1/3
Spotted Rail <i>Pardirallus maculatus maculatus</i>	2/2
Purple Gallinule <i>Porphyrio martinica</i>	1/2
Common Gallinule <i>Gallinula galeata</i>	1/4
Limpkin <i>Aramus guarauna</i>	3/2
Killdeer <i>Charadrius vociferous</i>	11/10
Black-necked Stilt <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	7/15
Northern Jacana <i>Jacana spinosa</i>	1/2
Greater Yellowlegs <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	2/20
Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	2/100
Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularia</i>	2/1
Least Sandpiper <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	2/300

Long-billed Dowitcher <i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	1/10
Wilson's Snipe <i>Gallinago delicata</i>	1/1
Laughing Gull <i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	3/20
Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	1/1
Royal Tern <i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	6/15
Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	1/6
Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i>	7/800
Scaly-naped Pigeon <i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>	1/1
White-crowned Pigeon <i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	4/5
Plain Pigeon <i>Patagioenas inornata inornata</i>	1/1
Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	6/20
Zenaida Dove <i>Zenaida aurita</i>	2/7
Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	11/50
Common Ground-Dove <i>Columbina passerina insularis</i>	12/10
Gray-fronted Quail-Dove <i>Geotrygon caniceps</i>	1/2
Blue-headed Quail-Dove <i>Starnoenas cyanocephala</i>	1/4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	1/1
Great Lizzard-Cuckoo <i>Saurothera merlini</i>	9/6
Smooth-billed Ani <i>Crotophaga ani</i>	11/50
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	1/1 H
Bare-legged Owl <i>Gymnoglaux lawrencii</i>	1/3
Cuban Pygmy-Owl <i>Glaucidium siju</i>	4/2
Stygian Owl <i>Asio stygius siguapa</i>	1/1
Cuban Nightjar <i>Antrostomus cubanensis</i>	1/1
Antillean Palm-Swift <i>tachornis phoenicobia</i>	13/50
Cuban Emerald <i>Chlorostibon ricordii</i>	12/8
Bee Hummingbird <i>Mellisuga helenae</i>	1/8
Cuban Trogon <i>Priotelus temnurus</i>	7/6
Cuban Tody <i>Todus multicolor</i>	8/7
Belted Kingfisher <i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	10/3
West Indian Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes superciliaris superciliaris</i>	10/8
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	2/2
Cuban Green Woodpecker <i>Xiphidopicus percussus</i>	7/3
Northern Flicker <i>Colaptes auratus chrysocaulosus</i>	1/1
Fernandina's Flicker <i>Colaptes fernandinae</i>	1/3
Cuban Parrot <i>Amazona leucocephala leucocephala</i>	4/60
Crested Caracara <i>Caracara cheriway</i>	4/9
American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius sparverius</i>	2/1
American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius sparveroides</i>	11/52
Merlin <i>Falco columbarius columbarius</i>	6/3
Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus tundrius</i>	5/2
Cuban Pewee <i>Contopus caribaeus caribaeus</i>	10/15
La Sagra's Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus sagrae sagre</i>	9/5
Loggerhead Kingbird <i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus caudifasciatus</i>	8/5
Giant Kingbird <i>Tyrannus cubensis</i>	2/1
White-eyed Vireo <i>Vireo griseus</i>	8/3

Cuban Vireo <i>Vireo gundlachii</i>	9/6
Yellow-throated Vireo <i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	4/2
Black-whiskered Vireo <i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	1/1
Palm Crow <i>Corvus palmarum</i>	1/11
Cuban Crow <i>Corvus nasicus</i>	8/7
Tree Swallow <i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	6/70
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	1/7
Zapata Wren <i>Ferminia cerverai</i>	3/4 H
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila caerulea caerulea</i>	6/2
Cuban Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila lembeyei</i>	1/4
Cuban Solitaire <i>Myadestes elisabeth</i>	1/2
Red-legged Thrush <i>Turdus plumbeus rubripes</i>	11/11
Gray Catbird <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	6/7
Northern Mockingbird <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	12/50
Ovenbird <i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	6/3
Northern Waterthrush <i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	6/10
Worm-eating Warbler <i>Helmitheros vermivorum</i>	1/1
Louisiana Waterthrush <i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	3/1
Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	10/2
Common Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	7/12
Blue-winged Warbler <i>Vermivora pinus</i>	1/1
Tennessee Warbler <i>Oreothlypis peregrine</i>	4/8
Hooded Warbler <i>Setophaga citrine</i>	1/1
American Redstart <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	11/10
Cape May Warbler <i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	6/2
Northern Parula <i>Setophaga americana</i>	10/12
Magnolia Warbler <i>Setophaga magnolia</i>	1/1
Yellow Warbler <i>Setophaga petechia gundlachi</i>	1/8
Black-throated Blue Warbler <i>Setophaga caerulescens caerulescens</i>	8/5
Black-throated Blue Warbler <i>Setophaga caerulescens cairnsi</i>	2/1
Palm Warbler <i>Setophaga palmarum palmarum</i>	12/25
Olive-capped Warbler <i>Setophaga pityophila</i>	1/3
Yellow-throated Warbler <i>Setophaga dominica</i>	9/10
Prairie Warbler <i>Setophaga discolor</i>	7/20
Black-throated Green Warbler <i>Setophaga virens</i>	3/3
Yellow-headed Warbler <i>Teretistris fernandinae</i>	7/25
Oriente Warbler <i>Teretistris fornsi</i>	1/9
Western Spindalis <i>Spindalis zena pretrei</i>	8/15
Red-legged Honeycreeper <i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>	2/5
Cuban Bullfinch <i>Melpyrrha nigra nigra</i>	6/10
Cuban Grassquit <i>Tiaris canora</i>	1/5
Yellow-faced Grassquit <i>Tiaris olivacea olivacea</i>	8/20
Zapata Sparrow <i>Torreornis inexpectata inexpectata</i>	1/2
Summer Tanager <i>Piranga rubra</i>	1/1 H
Blue Grosbeak <i>passerina caerulea</i>	3/2
Indigo Bunting <i>Passerina cyanea</i>	5/5

Painted Bunting <i>Passerina ciris</i>	2/1
Red-shouldered Blackbird <i>Agelaius assimilis</i>	2/5
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird <i>Agelaius humeralis humeralis</i>	9/30
Eastern Meadowlark <i>Sturnella magna hippocrepsis</i>	8/13
Cuban Blackbird <i>Dives atroviolacea</i>	12/60
Greater Antillean Grackle <i>Quiscalus niger</i>	11/30
Cuban Oriole <i>Icterus dominicensis</i>	8/5
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	9/50

Brief day-by-day itinerary

27 October 2012 – Havana to Celestino Farm and Hacienda Cortina in La Guira National Park, all around San Diego de los Banos, and drive to Maria La Gorda in Guanahacabibes National Park.

28 October 2012 – Maria La Gorda and El Barraco and Guanahacabibes National Park

29 October 2012 – Maria La Gorda to La Bajaida in Guanahacabibes National Park and drive to San Diego de Los Banos.

30 October 2012 – San Diego de los Banos to Cueva de Los Portoles to La Guira and Hacienda Cortina and to Havana and Playa Larga.

31 October 2012 – Bermejas and Playa Giron and Playa Larga.

1 November 2012 – La Turba, Palpite, Playa Larga and La Salinas.

2 November 2012 – La Boca, La Turba and to Camaguey.

3 November 2012 – Camaguey and to Majasa area to southeast and in afternoon to Sierra de Cuvitas.

4 November 2012 – Camaguey to Batey Don Pedro.

5 November 2012 – Batey San Pedro to La Turba and return to Havana.

6 November 2012 – Havana Botanical Gardens in Lenin's Park.

CUBA TRIP SUMMARY

Our morning started with a morning walk around the gardens in Cancun, Mexico, near the airport. We noted several Tropical Mockingbirds and a male and female Orange Oriole, a Yucatan Peninsula endemic. We departed for Havana later that day and shortly after our arrival noted a half dozen Antillean Palm Swifts, a West Indian endemic.

The next morning we went to the home of and met Orlando H. Garrido, a very well-known Cuban ornithologist and a former tennis pro. Orlando is also the senior author of the field guide to The Birds of Cuba (with Arturo Kirkconnell). Highlights of birds around Havana included a female Cuban Emerald, a Red-legged Thrush, and a half dozen Cuban Blackbirds.

The next morning we went from Havana to San Diego de los Banos where at a farm we found about five Cuban Grassquits (a declining and now rather scarce endemic) along with some twenty Yellow-faced Grassquits of the West Indian *olivacea* subspecies. A real highlight was a single Giant Kingbird, a now rare Cuban endemic. Other highlights included Snail Kite, Cuban Green and West Indian Woodpeckers, two Loggerhead Kingbirds, fifteen Tawny-shouldered Blackbirds, four Cuban Orioles and two Red-legged Honeycreepers (believed to have been introduced to Cuba long ago) and a half dozen Western Spindalis (endemic *pretrei* subspecies). A Louisiana Waterthrush was well-studied. Later that day we continued on to Maria la Gorda in Guanahacabibes National Park at the far western end of Cuba.

We spent a full day at Guanahacabibes National Park and certainly our highlight was some eight Bee Hummingbirds, including several males in non-breeding plumage (lacking the gorget). We had superb views of several. Other highlights included a pair of Cuban Black-Hawks, a Plain Pigeon and two Zenaida Doves, two Cuban Pygmy-Owls, some five of the striking Cuban Trogons and five Cuban Todies, Cuban Pewees, Cuban Vireos, and Cuban Crows (what a variety of odd calls they give) and many Yellow-headed Warblers and Western Spindalis. A single Black-whiskered Vireo was late.

We spent a final morning at this beautiful national park, but didn't add anything new, apart from a displaying Broad-winged Hawk of the endemic *cubanensis* subspecies. Later we continued on back to San Diego de los Banos.

The following morning we checked out Che e Guevara's cave at Cuerva de los Portoles. Here, Che hid-out during the Cuban Missile Crisis back in October of 1962. More notable though were the singing Cuban Solitaires that provided good views too. Nearby we had good views of Olive-capped Warblers and a single migrant juvenile Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Later we went back to Havana and then on to Playa Larga and the Bay of Pigs. Near Playa Larga, we had excellent views of two Red-shouldered Blackbirds, a localized Cuban endemic.

The following morning we birded Bermejas and Playa Giron. It was here in 1961 that Cuban nationals landed and tried to establish a beachhead. Castro's forces proved more formidable and triumphed after several intense days of fighting. The birding around the famed Zapata Swamp was excellent. We had brief views of two Gray-headed Quail-Doves, but had good and prolonged scope views of four Blue-headed Quail-Doves along with seven Zenaida Doves. We were also fortunate to get excellent scope views of a pair of threatened Fernadina's Flickers and later saw one on forest trail that was actually walking. At least two South American flicker species also walk. Other highlights

included three Bare-legged Owls, 20 Cuban Parrots, a male Hooded Warbler and a Northern Flicker (“Yellow-shafted”) of the endemic *chrysocaulosus* subspecies.

The following morning at La Turba before dawn we saw a Stygian Owl (endemic *siguapa* subspecies). Later near there we tried for Zapata Wren at Larba, but succeeded in only hearing it. We did see two distinctive Zapata Sparrows of the nominate subspecies. Later that day after a break at Playa Larga, we visited Las Salinas where a number of water birds were present including 45 American Flamingoes. On the return just after dusk we had excellent views of a Cuban Nightjar.

We again tried the next morning for Zapata Wren, and several may have glimpsed it, but it was uncooperative. Many of us did see a Spotted Rail (nominate West Indian subspecies) that had been calling. Then we were off for the long drive to the old colonial city of Camaguey in eastern Cuba.

The next morning we ventured to the Najasa area southeast of Camaguey. Our main target species was Cuban Parakeet, but we were unable to find any. We did see some eleven Palm Crows. We also listened to the singing Eastern Meadowlarks of the endemic *hippocrepsis* subspecies. They actually sounded more like Western than Eastern Meadowlark and later on our final day we had superb visuals and they looked little like North American Eastern Meadowlarks. I suspect they are more likely their own meadowlark species, and Cuban Ornithologists speculate that an additional meadowlark species might be found the high mountains of extreme eastern Cuba. Later in the afternoon north of Camaguey in the Sierra de Cuvitas we had excellent views of a good number of Oriente Warblers and late in the day finally found several of the very distinctive appearing and endemic Cuban Gnatcatcher.

The following day we tracked west again and didn't do too much birding. We found a pond near where we stayed at Batey San Pedro that had a variety of shorebirds, including Long-billed Dowitchers. And we saw a Limpkin. The following morning we tried again at La Turba for Zapata Wren, but again only heard it. Later we said our goodbyes to our leader, William Suarez.

On our final day we birded the Havana Botanical Gardens in Lenin Park. A northerner had come through and it was now quite cool and windy (winds from the north). We found variety of North American migrant and wintering wood warblers, including a striking (and rare) adult male Blue-winged Warbler.