

# WFO and Cuba Bird Studies Program Daily Log and Annotated Species List

3-15 November 2015

Compiled by:  
Kimball L. Garrett



Bee Hummingbird *Mellisuga helenae* and Cuban Parrot *Amazona leucocephala*. Photos by Ron Mallory

**WFO and Cuba Bird Studies Program  
Daily Log and Annotated Species List  
3-15 November 2015**

**Participants**

Bill Aspegren  
Christie Aspegren  
Judith Dunham  
Robbie Fischer  
Carolyn Greene  
Frank Hall  
Laurie Lawrence  
Carol Lombardi  
Steve Lombardi  
John Luther

Ron Mallory  
Andrew Mauro  
Joseph Morlan  
Jude Power  
Marjorie Siegel  
Kimball Garrett – WFO Leader  
Gary Markowski – CBSP Leader  
Giraldo Alayon – Cuban Nature Guide  
Osiris Riol Gonzales – Havanatur Guide  
Oscar – Bus Driver

**Photo Galleries**

See galleries by:  
Joseph Morlan  
Ron Mallory

<http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/Cuba/index.htm>

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/2920549@N21/pool/129363730@N02>

**Daily Log**

**03 NOVEMBER 2015. MIAMI TO HAVANA.**

Our group assembled in the early evening of 2 November 2015 at the Miami Hyatt Airport Doral/West Hotel for introductions and preparations for an early morning departure to the Miami airport for the charter flight to Havana. The first hotel airport shuttle van left the hotel at 0430 hr., and the remainder of the group waited for its return for their shuttle to the airport. Assembled at the airport, we met Luis Silva who shepherded us through the process of document checks, baggage check-in, and payment of departure taxes (tax for the Havana to Miami return flight was paid at this time). Flight 426 (World Atlantic) was scheduled to depart at 0800 hr, though actual departure was 0835. We landed in Havana at 0922 hr under scattered small cumulus clouds and a SE wind. From the plane on the tarmac (as we waited for access to a gate) we could see Cattle Egret, Turkey Vulture, Killdeer and Northern Mockingbird. Immigration and customs proceeded reasonably smoothly, and Gary Markowski of the Caribbean Conservation Trust met the group as we departed the restricted customs area. We changed dollars to CUCs and then went outside to our Chinese-made Yutong bus, driven

by Oscar. We also met Osiris Riol Gonzalez, our Havanatur guide. We left the airport area around 1120 hr and drove into Havana.

Our first true birding stop was a small park (Parque Municipal Zapata) close to the restaurant where we had lunch; West Indian and Cuban endemics here were Cuban Emerald, Cuban Blackbird and Red-legged Thrush, and we got our first taste of the abundance of North American mainland migrants which we would experience throughout the trip. After lunch at El Aljibe we visited the home of one of the most famous Cuban ornithologists, Orlando Garrido, where he regaled us with stories of his work with birds (and his tennis career) and where we were also able to see mounted specimens of nearly all of the Cuban endemic bird species. We left Dr. Garrido's house around 1500 hr and checked in to the Hotel Tryp Havana Libre several blocks up "La Rampa" (23<sup>rd</sup> St.) from the malecon. Many of us walked down to the malecon to check out birds at the shore (basically, Laughing Gulls) and visit the nearby Hotel Nacional.

#### **04 NOVEMBER 2015. HAVANA – LA CHORRERA (ARTEMISA PROV.) – LAS PALMARES LUNCH STOP –GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA AND MARÍA LA GORDA.**

Before breakfast some of us checked the local park (the Coppelia ice cream plaza), adding West Indian specialties such as Antillean Palm Swift, Cuban Emerald and Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, as well as the distinctive Cuban subspecies of American Kestrel. We were joined after breakfast by Giraldo Alayon, a biologist with a specialty in arachnology, who would be our Cuban naturalist guide throughout the trip. We loaded up the bus and departed for points west at 0810 hr. As we drove west through Havana and eventually into Artemisa Province Giraldo gave us some background on the geological history of Cuba and the Greater Antilles.

Our first birding stop was at La Chorrera, a wooded area with a stream that had small cabins for camping. Scores of wintering North American mainland birds were joined by some of the most desired of Cuban endemics and near-endemics, including Cuban Pygmy-Owl, Cuban Tody, Cuban Green Woodpecker, and Cuban Bullfinch; a few keen eyes managed to spot a pair of Cuban Grassquits high in a tree, and they eventually came down to the ground next to the path (where the grass quits) and were well-seen by all.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent on the long drive through Pinar del Río Province all the way to the Guanahacabibes Peninsula in westernmost Cuba; along this drive we traversed the premier tobacco-growing area of Cuba as Osiris and cigar aficionado Oscar described the ins and outs of the Cuban tobacco industry. We made a lunch stop at Restaurant Las Barrigonas in Las Palmares and a fuel stop in Sandino. As we arrived at our hotel at María La Gorda around 1700 hr under light sprinkles we were surprised to see a juvenile Mississippi Kite coursing overhead feeding on *Urania* moths.

#### **05 NOVEMBER 2015. GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA – MARÍA LA GORDA AND EL VERRACO AND LA BAJADA (PARQUE NACIONAL GUANAHACABIBES.)**

We did some early morning birding on the hotel grounds at Maria La Gorda (after some pre-dawn rain), with a break for breakfast. Highlights included nice looks at Plain

Pigeons, a swirling flock of Mississippi Kites, Cuban Orioles, Zenaida Doves, and many North American migrants including Cape May Warblers. We left the hotel around 0840 hr and drove to the park headquarters at La Bajada (with nice looks at another Plain Pigeon on the way); we picked up our local guide Abel and drove west out toward Cabo San Antonio to El Verraco (the “Bee Hummingbird Spot”). We weren’t disappointed, with a couple of these world’s smallest birds feeding inconspicuously around flowering trees; it was also nice to study both Cuban Pewee and Eastern Wood-Pewee in close proximity. A forest walk nearby netted the only Hooded Warbler of the trip (a briefly seen male), along with Yellow-headed Warblers (one of two Cuban endemics in the genus *Teretistris*, which turn out not to be parulids and are elevated by some to family rank as Teretistridae). We returned to the hotel mid-day for lunch and left again around 1445 hr for more forest birding in the La Bajada area – getting nice looks at one of the “most-wanted” birds of the trip, the Cuban Trogon.

**6 NOVEMBER 2015. GUANAHACABIBES PENINSULA – MARÍA LA GORDA, EL BERRACO, CARABELITA TRAIL – PRESA EAST OF PINAR DEL RÍO – SAN DIEGO DE LOS BANOS**

There were waves of rain through the night, and a nice downpour right when we planned to meet to bird the hotel grounds at 0630 hr. We did manage to see a nice variety of wintering mainland birds (including Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings) along with Cuban Orioles, Great Lizard Cuckoo, Zenaida Dove, etc.

After breakfast we departed for the park headquarters at La Bajada for more forest birding; we also made a stop at the lagunas along the inland side of the road southwest of there, seeing a good variety of waterbirds including West Indian Whistling-Ducks, Least Grebes and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Back at the hotel for lunch, birding on the hotel grounds yielded another Bee Hummingbird along the rear fence line and many more Plain Pigeons. We departed around 1350 hr with intermittent light rain.

The long drive back east toward San Diego de Los Banos was broken up by a brief stop at Hotel Pinar del Rio; we arrived at Hotel Mirador in San Diego at 1800 hr.

**7 NOVEMBER 2015. SAN DIEGO DE LOS BANOS – PARQUE NACIONAL LA GÜIRA – CUEVA DE LOS PORTALES – HACIENDA CORTINA – DRIVE TO PLAYA LARGA (BAHÍA COCHINES)**

While taking an early breakfast at Hotel Mirador we were entertained by the calls of Antillean Palm Swifts which were roosting in the thatch of the roof covering the dining area. Under mostly cloudy skies we drove about 40 minutes to Parque Nacional La Güira and Cueva de los Portales (“Che Guevara’s Cave”); our local guide Cesar was intimately familiar with the birds of this area. We heard, then saw, our primary target bird, the Cuban Solitaire soon after our arrival in the cave area, and had memorable looks at Cuban Trogon, Cuban Tody and Scaly-naped Pigeon. A Red-legged Honeycreeper was briefly seen, and a Louisiana Waterthrush was actually inside the cave system. A stop in the pines along the ridge on the return trip yielded the very local Olive-capped Warbler, and another Olive-capped was in planted pines at Hacienda Cortines (at the park entrance) closer to San Diego.

After lunch we departed around 1245 hr for the Zapata Swamp/Bay of Pigs region in Matanzas Province. We saw a number of waterbirds at the Niña Bonita reservoir along the highway, including Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck. We reached the Playa Larga Hotel at the north end of Bahía Cochines (Bay of Pigs) around 1800 hr.

#### **8 NOVEMBER 2015. PLAYA LARGA – SOPLILLAR – LAS SALINAS**

As we got ready for our early morning bus boarding we had nice looks at two Cuban Parrots; by 0705 we were off to Soplillar [Note: references seem evenly divided between the spellings “Sopillar” and “Soplillar”], a wooded area east of Playa Larga. *En route* our local guide Angel spotted a nightjar roosting fairly high in a roadside tree – we got out for excellent scope looks and discovered it was a nighthawk – most likely a Common Nighthawk (a scarce transient in Cuba normally gone by this time in November), although Antillean Nighthawk (a summer resident in Cuba that is usually gone by October) could not be ruled out for certain.

Our walk through the woods at Soplillar became our first experience with the joys and frustration of quail-doves; we did manage to see Gray-fronted Quail-Dove on the trail. We also had nice studies of Great Lizard Cuckoo, Cuban Vireo, Cuban Pewee and Cuban Pygmy-Owl, and North American migrants proved numerous, including several Gray Catbirds and our only Wood Thrush of the trip. A short drive to more open wet pasturelands and light woodlands to the east produced Limpkin and White Ibis and great views of Cuban Orioles and Great Lizard Cuckoos. We returned to Playa Larga and had lunch at “El Pescadore Chuchi.”

We departed again at 1500 hr for Las Salinas – extensive shallow wetlands and mangroves on the west side of the Bay of Pigs. Highlights here included great looks at Cuban Black Hawk, over 400 American Flamingos, Magnificent Frigatebirds, numerous herons, Roseate Spoonbill and a Wood Stork, along with resident “Golden” Yellow Warblers. There was an exceptional amount of water at Las Salinas, resulting in very limited mudflats and few shorebirds.

#### **9 NOVEMBER 2015. LA TURBA – LA BOCA – PALPITE.**

We had an early (0600) departure for La Turba, an area of extensive sawgrass wetlands and light woodland north of Playa Larga and west of the main highway. Our key quarry here was the Zapata Wren, and with patience we were finally able to get reasonably good looks at a singing bird that approached in the shrubs across the small canal. We could hear Red-shouldered Blackbirds in the marshes but weren’t able to see them.

On the return trip we made a very brief stop at “La Boca” (Boca de Laguna del Tesoro, also known as the “Criadero de Cocodrilos” or crocodile farm); we would return here later in the afternoon. A roadside marsh stop for Red-shouldered Blackbirds produced only Tawny-shouldered, along with Limpkins. A bit farther down the road we turned east at Palpite and covered some open fields with scattered woodland patches in hopes of finding Fernandina’s Flicker (no luck); birds were numerous, however, and we had great looks at the endemic subspecies of Northern (“Yellow-shafted”) Flicker along with a variety of North American migrants and a couple of Northern Jacanas.

We checked out of the hotel at noon and headed to lunch at Casa Tiki right at the top end of the Bay of Pigs, admiring the Cave Swallows that were flying around and darting under the concrete seawall. After lunch we returned to La Boca where North American migrants abounded (including Louisiana Waterthrush) and enjoyed great views of Cuban Parrots along with a Purple Gallinule. Late in the afternoon we headed south to Playa Giron where we checked into our lodging at several “casas particulares” (basically, the Cuban version of B&Bs) close to the main intersection in town. We were served a delicious and enormous dinner at Casa Luis – the food here was certainly considered “tops” for the trip by all.

#### **10 NOVEMBER 2015. PLAYA GIRON – BERMEJA – LA CUCHILLA.**

After a great breakfast at Casa Luis in Playa Giron we drove east to the Reserva Faunistica Bermeja, meeting up with our local guide Orlando Ramirez who greeted us excitedly since at that moment there were up to four Blue-headed Quail-Doves coming in to the seed he had provided in a clearing viewed from a partial blind. We calmly(?) filed out of the bus and had great looks at these very secretive doves whose monotypic genus *Starnoenas* is endemic to Cuba. Additional birding at the roadside yielded a flock of the endemic Cuban Parakeets (localized and generally difficult to find on our itinerary) in a group of palms. The forested reserve yielded Bare-legged Owl (formerly mis-named as a “screech-owl”), Key West Quail-Dove and two more Gray-fronted Quail-Doves, and a host of migrants (including a Worm-eating Warbler).

After departing this bird-rich reserve we continued on the road east to a marshy wetland area known as La Cuchilla. Here we heard and glimpsed a Red-shouldered Blackbird (but we vowed to return for better looks) and encountered the enigmatic Cuban Meadowlark (currently considered an endemic subspecies of the Eastern Meadowlark, but with a song more suggestive of Western). We then drove back to Playa Giron and down the coast several kilometers to a coastal diving resort and restaurant known as Caleta Buena; it was an opportunity for some snorkeling, swimming, and dominos. Returning to Playa Giron we took a quick tour of the Bay of Pigs museum, then decided to return to La Cuchilla. Nearing La Cuchilla we were thrilled to see (and study at leisure) a Fernandina’s Flicker spotted by Joe Morlan from the moving bus. At La Cuchilla we were finally treated to good views of the endemic Red-shouldered Blackbird and more studies of the Cuban [Eastern] Meadowlark. A brief stop at Bermeja yielded great views of a Bare-legged Owl at a roost site. To top it off, we had another great dinner at Casa Luis, with lightening flashing in the sky to the north and east.

#### **11 NOVEMBER 2015. PLAYA GIRON THROUGH CIENFUEGOS AND VILLA CLARA PROVINCES – HOTEL LAS CANEYES – CAYO COCO CAUSEWAY**

After another great breakfast at Casa San Luis in Playa Giron we boarded the bus and departed to 0800 hr for the long trip northeast to Cayo Coco. Among the roadside bird sightings was a large flock of Glossy Ibis in Cienfuegos Province. After reaching Villa Clara Province we explored the grounds of Hotel Las Caneyes in Santa Clara in the late morning, noting numerous Antillean Palm Swifts in the roofing thatch and

encountering numerous North American migrants including Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and a flighty Chuck-Will's-Widow.

We passed through a portion of Sancti Spiritus Province and finally reached Ciego de Avila Province, stopping for a late lunch at Los Hoyas roadside restaurant. We reached the southern end of the long causeway to Cayo Coco (which opened in 1992) at 1630 hr; a stop at La Silla at the north end of the causeway yielded a Green Heron, a single American Flamingo, and many wintering North American migrants in the mangroves as well as Golden [Yellow] Warblers. We arrived at Hotel Sol Cayo Coco, an all-inclusive resort-style hotel, around 1745 hr. There were intermittent rain showers all evening. Certainly a low point of the trip, and there weren't many, was learning this evening that Osiris Riol González, our delightful and informative Havanatur guide, was being recalled to Havana to help with another tour; her replacement, Nelson, would arrive the following day.

### **12 NOVEMBER 2015. CAYO COCO – CAYO ROMANO – CAYO PAREDON GRANDE – CUEVA DE JAVALI.**

In the morning we met Paulino Lopez Delgado, the well-known and highly knowledgeable birding guide for the Cayo Coco region. With Paulino we drove east from Cayo Coco to Cayo Romano (about 800 sq. km.) and were very soon rewarded with outstanding views of Zapata Sparrows; the sole member of the genus *Torreornis*, endemic to Cuba, these delightful sparrows are perhaps better called Cuban Sparrows as only one of the three populations occurs in the Zapata Swamp. We also encountered the Oriente Warbler, the eastern sibling species to the Yellow-headed Warbler which we saw in Pinar del Rio. Several Cuban Black Hawks were well-seen, and waterbirds were abundant (including our first "Great White Heron," a white-plumaged population of the widespread Great Blue Heron, separated as *Ardea herodias occidentalis* and considered by some a valid species). A flock of shorebirds near the intersection with the road leading north to Cayo Paredon Grande was dominated by some 80 Stilt Sandpipers.

As we neared Cayo Paredon Grande in a landscape of mangroves and shallow water that was not quite land and not quite bay, we could hear several Thick-billed Vireos singing. Oriente Warblers were visible in the roadside scrub, but the real prize here was the chance to study four Cuban Gnatcatchers. This localized endemic can be found in southern Cienfuegos Province and more easily on the southeastern Cuban coast, but the northern cayos of Ciego de Avila and Camagüey are also prime area. Another highlight here was a nice scope view of a Mangrove Cuckoo. We proceeded on to the lighthouse and walked a dirt track eastward through thickets of low palms and scrub; here we finally got good looks at Thick-billed Vireos which were singing conspicuously but hard to see as they skulked well within the scrub. A close group of American Flamingos foraged in the shallows between the road and the Caribbean Sea. Most of the group got to see a couple of Painted Buntings foraging ahead on the roadside.

Returning south to Cayo Romano we checked the flats again for shorebirds – the Stilt Sandpipers were gone, but near a large group of Semipalmated Plovers we saw three Wilson's Plovers; several Reddish Egrets were on the flats here, and a distant waterfowl flock included Blue-winged Teal and American Wigeon. Soon after crossing the bridge back to Cayo Coco we scanned the flats and low mangroves to the south and were treated

to the adult Lesser Black-backed Gull which had been present here for some time. A check of the beach near the Marina Gaviota in the late morning yielded little because of the high tide, but we returned here on a lower tide in the mid-afternoon and had great looks at five Piping Plovers (one of which sported a USGS metal band on its left leg); Sanderlings and Ruddy Turnstones were numerous on the beach here.

Late in the afternoon we drove to Cueva de Javalí (“Boar’s Cave”), a grotto outfitted with a disco and housing roosting bats (many Waterhouse’s Leaf-nosed Bats, *Macrotus waterhousei*, and a single Big Brown Bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*). In the dense low forest around the cave we had nice views of a Key West Quail-Dove on the ground (at a consistent spot for this species next to some outbuildings); once again North American migrants were numerous in the woodlands, along with three Oriente Warblers. A brief stop at the local sewage lagoons in the very late afternoon turned up Black-necked Stilts and Spotted Sandpipers and numerous Northern Shovelers and Blue-winged Teal.

### **13 NOVEMBER 2015. CAYO COCO – CAYO GUILLERMO – CAYO COCO CAUSEWAY – MORON FISH PONDS**

Under cloudy skies we gathered for a 0600 hr departure for Cayo Guillermo, just northwest of Cayo Coco. The mangroves, low scrub and shallow wetlands of Cayo Guillermo had numerous waterbirds, including an American Anhinga. Palm Warblers were typically abundant, with one unfortunate individual caught in the strong web of the spider *Nephila clavipes* (an orb-weaver known as the Golden Silk Spider and colloquially as the “Banana Spider” found from the se. USA and West Indies south through Central America to Argentina); the bird worked itself loose as we watched. Our main quarry at Cayo Guillermo was the Bahama Mockingbird – a skulking mimid that is common on some of the Bahama islands but restricted in Cuba to a few northern cayos where it is declining due to habitat loss from resort development. Formerly easy to find at Cayo Guillermo, it is now scarce; another birding group had seen one in the distance a day or two earlier, but we were not successful. It didn’t help that a steady rain began to fall around 0800 hr., forcing our retreat to Cayo Coco.

Many of us birded the Hotel Sol Cayo Coco grounds and nearby roadside scrub in the late morning, with highlights including Cuban Oriole, Western Spindalis, Cuban Pewee, La Sagra’s Flycatcher and Cuban Bullfinch. Clapper Rails were heard and glimpsed in the mangroves adjacent to the hotel grounds.

After lunch we began our drive back toward Havana; we reached the southern end of the causeway around 1410 hr., noting a group of 35 Sandwich Terns on a low rocky shoal to the east. We dropped Paulino off in the nearby town (Loma de Turiguanó) and then continued south to the area around Moron. A small set of fish ponds here hosted several Snail Kites, numerous herons and 28 Glossy Ibis. Around 1605-1625 hr we made a brief restroom stop at Villa San Jose del Lago, then continued west through the historic city of Remedios. We reached our hotel (La Granjita) on the outskirts of Santa Clara after dark.

### **14 NOVEMBER 2015. SANTA CLARA (HOTEL LA GRANJITA) – JAGUEY GRANDE (FIESTA CAMPESINA)**

Pre-breakfast birding on the grounds of Hotel La Granjita yielded numerous North American migrants, including a Chuck-will's Widow that showed (parts of) itself in the scope as it perched 6-8 meters up in a palm. Antillean Palm Swifts were abundant, and Cuban endemics/near-endemics included Cuban Vireo, Cuban Pewee, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Cuban Emerald, and Cuban Tody. Passing through Santa Clara we stopped briefly at the train monument and the Guevara monument. Returning to Matanzas Province, we made a stop near Jaguey Grande at Fiesta Campesina (with a small zoo, musical entertainment and, importantly, lunch). Birding on and near the grounds yielded Cuban [Eastern] Meadowlark and Smooth-billed Anis.

We reached Hotel Palco in the Mirador area of Havana at 1545 hr. Here we met up once again with Gary Markowski, and in the evening we dined in town.

### **15 NOVEMBER 2015. HAVANA (HOTEL PALCO)**

Birding the nearby residential streets and river channel produced the expected assortment of West Indian endemics and North American migrants. The day was spent touring Old Havana and other parts of the city, including a large marketplace. The group assembled in the early evening for a farewell dinner at a bayside restaurant. Then it was back to the hotel to pack and prepare for an early morning departure to the airport and the return flight to Miami.

**This marked the official end of the trip, which netted us 162 species, 23 endemic species, another ten near-endemic species, and three endemic (or near-endemic) subspecies that might deserve species rank.**

### **FAVORITE BIRDS BY PARTICIPANTS:**

[Five points for first place vote, 4 points for 2<sup>nd</sup> place vote, etc.; each participant ranked their top five species. Twenty-one species received at least one vote.]

- #1 **Cuban Tody** (40 points)
- #2 Cuban Trogon (24)
- #3 Blue-headed Quail-Dove (19)
- #4 Fernandina's Flicker (18)
- #5 Great Lizard Cuckoo (15)
- #5 Zapata Wren (15)
- #7 Bee Hummingbird (13)
- #8 Cuban Solitaire (11)
- #8 Zapata Sparrow (11)
- #10 Cuban Gnatcatcher (10)

Runners up were West Indian Whistling-Duck, Bare-legged Owl, and Piping Plover. Five other species received three points, one received two points, and two received one point.

**Cuban Endemic Species Seen**  
(not all species were seen by all participants)

Gundlach's Hawk  
Cuban Black Hawk  
Gray-fronted Quail-Dove  
Blue-headed Quail-Dove  
Bare-legged Owl  
Cuban Pygmy-Owl  
Bee Hummingbird  
Cuban Trogon  
Cuban Tody  
Cuban Green Woodpecker  
Fernandina's Flicker  
Cuban Parakeet  
Zapata Wren  
Cuban Solitaire  
Cuban Vireo  
Cuban Gnatcatcher  
Yellow-headed Warbler  
Oriente Warbler  
Cuban Grassquit  
Zapata Sparrow  
Red-shouldered Blackbird  
Cuban Blackbird  
Cuban Oriole

**Cuban Near-Endemic Species Seen**

Cuban Parrot (also Bahamas, Cayman Is.)  
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (also Bahamas)  
Cuban Emerald (also Bahamas)  
West Indian Woodpecker (also Bahamas, Grand Cayman)  
Cuban Pewee (also Bahamas)  
La Sagra's Flycatcher (also Bahamas)  
Cuban Crow (also Grand Caicos I.)  
Olive-capped Warbler (also Bahamas)  
Western Spindalis (also Bahamas, Grand Cayman, Cozumel)  
Cuban Bullfinch (also Grand Cayman)

**Cuban Endemic or Near-Endemic Taxa Seen that may warrant full-species status**

Cuban [American] Kestrel (*Falco sparverius sparverioides*; also on s. Bahamas)  
Cuban [Northern] Flicker (*Colaptes auratus chrysocaulosus*)  
Cuban [Eastern] Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna hippocrepis*)

**Cuban Endemic or Near-Endemic Species NOT Seen**

Cuban Kite (extremely rare, now limited to extreme NE)

Zapata Rail (extremely rare, no known accessible sites)  
 Cuban [Greater Antillean] Nightjar (*Caprimulgus cubanensis cubanensis*; fairly widespread but requires luck finding roosting birds or efforts with recordings at dusk)  
 Ivory-billed Woodpecker (far eastern Cuba; no positive sightings since 1980s)  
 Giant Kingbird (also formerly in the Bahamas; sometimes seen at Parque Nacional La Güira, but irregular there)  
 Cuban Martin (summer resident only; all have departed by November)  
 Palm Crow (also Hispaniola; reliable sites are in Camaguey Prov. and eastward)

## Annotated Species List

### STATUS AND ABUNDANCE CATEGORIES:

Definitions follow those described in *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba* by Garrido and Kirkconnell (2000):

**Abundant.** Over 20 individuals observed per day in appropriate habitat and season.  
**Common.** Five to 19 individuals observed per day in appropriate habitat and season.  
**Uncommon.** One to five individuals observed in a week in the appropriate habitat and season.  
**Rare.** One to five sightings per year expected in the appropriate habitat and season.  
**Very Rare.** One sighting every five years expected in the appropriate habitat and season.  
**Vagrant.** A bird that reaches Cuba by accident, or is sighted about once every 10 or 20 years.  
**Transient.** Migratory bird species that pass through Cuba, usually pausing only briefly.  
**Permanent Resident.** Bird species which remains in Cuba throughout the year.  
**Summer Resident.** Migratory bird species that arrive from the south principally during March, to breed in Cuba, with most departing by September.  
**Winter Resident.** Migratory bird species arriving from North America during the months of July through October that spend the winter in Cuba before departing in March and April of the following year.  
**Winter Visitor.** Migratory birds arriving in Cuba in winter and staying no longer than a few days.

### BIRDING LOCATIONS:

**La Habana Province**

Habana

**Artemisa Province**

Campismo La Chorrera

**Pinar del Rio Province**

Guanahacabibes Peninsula

Maria La Gorda and vic.

San Diego de los Baños

La Güira National Park

Cueva de Los Portales

**Matanzas Province**

Playa Giron

Playa Larga

La Boca (Criadero de Cocodrilos)

Zapata Swamp

Bermeja (Reserva Faunistica Bermeja)

La Turba

Los Hondónes

Las Salinas Wildlife Refuge

Soplillar

Caleta Buena

La Cuchilla

**Villa Clara Province**

Santa Clara: Hotel Las Caneyes

Santa Clara: Hotel La Granjita

**Ciego de Avila Province**

Cayo Coco

Cayo Paredon Grande

Cueva de Javali

Cayo Guillermo

## CUBAN AVIAN SPECIES ACCOUNTS

\* indicates Cuban Endemic species

\*\* indicates Cuban Endemic subspecies or race

### ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae

**West Indian Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna arborea*. Endemic to West Indies. A flock of 28 of these scarce and localized ducks was in the wetlands on the inland side of the road between La Bajada and Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov; one was seen by some participants in the small lake across from the entrance to the Hotel Sol Cayo Coco on 12 Nov.

[**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* (domestic). A few were noted around farms along roadsides, especially on the 4 Nov ride west through Pinar del Rio.]

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana*. Common winter resident. Fifteen were with teal in the shallow wetlands on Cayo Romano on 12 Nov and another was at the sewage lagoons on Cayo Coco the same day.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*. Common migrant and winter resident throughout Cuba. Flocks were seen in the wetlands between La Bajada and Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov (50) and on Cayo Romano (60) and the Cayo Coco sewage lagoons (50) on 12 Nov.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*. Common winter resident. Seen with other ducks near Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov and (up to 200) at the sewage lagoons on Cayo Coco 12 Nov.

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*. Common winter resident. In addition to a female at the ponds near Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov, we estimated some 85 at the Niña Bonita Reservoir on 7 Nov.

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*. Rare winter resident and transient. An estimated 40 were with other ducks on Niña Bonita Reservoir on 7 Nov.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis jamaicensis*. Rare permanent resident; winter resident. At least a dozen were with other ducks on Niña Bonita Reservoir on 7 Nov.

### GALLIFORMES: Numididae

[**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* (domestic). Small groups were seen in agricultural and ranchyard areas on several occasions, particularly in Pinar del Rio Prov., 4, 6 and 7 Nov. In addition, a few were on the grounds of the Hotel Nacional in Havana on 5 Nov.]

### GALLIFORMES: Odontophoridae

**Northern Bobwhite** *Colinus virginianus*. A flock of about ten flew across the highway northeast of the city of Ciego de Avila on 11 Nov. Despite the fact that the Cuban population has been given a subspecific name, it is likely that this species was introduced to Cuba (as well as the Bahamas and Bermuda); a recent phylogeographic study (Williford *et al.* *Wildlife Monographs* 193:1-49, 2015) found no unique haplotypes in Cuban birds.

### PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus dominicus*. Common permanent resident. Six were in the wetlands between La Bajada and Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps antillarum*. Common and widespread permanent resident. Some 20 were on Niña Bonita Reservoir on 7 Nov; one was seen from the Casa Tiki restaurant in Playa Larga 9 Nov.

#### **PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: Phoenicopteridae**

**American Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*. Common permanent resident along the Cuban coast, but slowly declining in numbers. We recorded over 400 individuals at Las Salinas on 8 Nov and more birds on Cayo Coco, Cayo Paredon Grande, and Cayo Guillermo 11-13 Nov (including a distant mass of perhaps up to 2000 birds east of the Cayo Coco causeway on 11 and 13 Nov).

#### **CICONIIFORMES: Ciconiidae**

**Wood Stork** *Mycteria americana*. Rare permanent resident. A single bird flew over us at Las Salinas on 8 Nov.

#### **SULIFORMES: Fregatidae**

**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens*. Common permanent resident along coasts. We noted small numbers at Maria La Gorda 6 Nov, in the Bay of Pigs area 8-9 Nov, and in the Cayo Coco region 11-13 Nov, including up to 75 north of Cayo Romano on 12 Nov.

#### **SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus mexicanus*. Common permanent resident. Our largest numbers (about 45) were at Las Salinas on 8 Nov, but about 10 were in the Cayo Romano/Cayo Coco areas 12 Nov.

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus floridanus*. Common permanent and rare winter resident. Small numbers were on the coast at Maria La Gorda 5-7 Nov, four were at Niña Bonita Reservoir 7 Nov, and small numbers were at Cayo Coco, the causeway, and Moron fish ponds 11-13 Nov.

#### **SULIFORMES: Anhingidae**

**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga leucogaster*. A common permanent resident. We scoped a fairly distant bird on Cayo Guillermo 13 Nov.

#### **PELECANIFORMES: Pelecanidae**

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*. Common permanent and winter resident. Small numbers were seen on the coast, at Caleta Buena 10 Nov and the Cayo Coco area 12-13 Nov.

#### **PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae**

**Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis exilis*. Common permanent and winter resident. We heard four birds at La Turba on 9 Nov and another at La Cuchilla on 10 Nov.

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias herodias*. Common permanent and winter resident. We saw typical gray individuals daily from 6 to 13 November and a couple of white

individuals (“Great White Herons, *A. h. occidentalis*”) at Cayo Romano 12 Nov. The latter is generally considered a color morph of Great Blue Heron found locally in s. Florida, the cays of Cuba, and locally elsewhere in the West Indies; some authorities cite ecological and behavioral differences between “Great Blue” and “Great White” forms in justifying recognition of *occidentalis* as a subspecies or perhaps even full species.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba egretta*. Common permanent and winter resident. Numerous individuals were seen daily 4-14 Nov in both coastal and inland freshwater habitats.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*. Common permanent and winter resident. Seen almost daily, with the largest numbers between Cayo Romano and Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov and at the Moron Fish Ponds on 13 Nov.

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*. Common permanent and winter resident. Seen in small numbers most days, in small wetlands and flooded fields along highways and in mangroves around the Bay of Pigs; five were at the Villa San José del Lago rest stop on 13 Nov.

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor ruficollis*. Common permanent and winter resident. We saw 5 at Las Salinas on 8 Nov and many in the Cayo Coco region, including at least 10 at Cayo Romano/Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov.

**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens rufescens*. Common permanent and winter resident. Small numbers were at Las Salinas 8 Nov and Cayo Romano on 12 Nov.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis ibis*. Abundant permanent and winter resident. Large numbers were seen along all of the highways, with daily high counts reaching 500 individuals.

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens maculata*. Common permanent and winter resident. Small numbers were seen on seven different days, at Maria La Gorda, Niña Bonita Reservoir, Las Salinas, and the Cayo Coco region.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*. Common permanent and winter resident. Two were at Niña Bonita Reservoir on 7 Nov.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea violacea*. Common permanent and winter resident. Single birds were seen near Maria La Gorda 5 and 6 Nov.

#### **PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae**

**White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*. Common permanent and winter resident. Five were in the lagunas between La Bajada and Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov. On 8 Nov we encountered 12 in the wetlands east of Soplillar, and another 28 at Las Salinas. On 12 Nov we saw around 90 at Cayo Romano, and roadside flocks were encountered in Ciego de Avila Prov. on 13 Nov.

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*. Uncommon, local permanent and winter resident. Twice we encountered large flocks (up to 200) in open agricultural/pastureland habitat – on 11 Nov in Cienfuegos Prov. and on 13 Nov in Ciego de Avila Prov.; on the latter date we had good looks at 28 birds at the Moron Fish Ponds.

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja*. Common permanent and winter resident. Seven were at Las Salinas 8 Nov, and a single bird was at Cayo Romano 12 Nov.

#### **CATHARTIFORMES: Cathartidae**

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura aura*. Abundant permanent resident, and also a rare winter resident (implying that some birds arrive from North America and over-winter).

These scavengers were ever-present, with daily counts usually in triple digits and reaching 400 to 500 birds when we covered long distances on the highways.

### **ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*. Common permanent and winter resident. Seen on five days, with multiple individuals at Las Salinas and the Cayo Coco Region; most or all of the birds we saw were North American migrants (subspecies *carolinensis*) with strong dark markings through the eyes, but one at a nest site at Cayo Coco 12 Nov was almost certainly the more white-headed West Indian subspecies *ridgwayi*.

**Snail Kite** *Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*. Common permanent resident. We looked for this species at the Moron Fish Ponds in Ciego de Avila Prov.; we were rewarded with at least three individuals there and got to see one “hunt” a large snail and return with it to a perch on a thatch-roofed shed.

**Mississippi Kite** *Ictinia mississippiensis*. Apparently a rare transient; not listed in Garrido and Kirkconnell’s *Birds of Cuba*. We were surprised to encounter a juvenile under cloudy skies as we arrived at Maria La Gorda on 4 Nov and delighted to watch it hunt *Urania* moths in the air; the following morning a group of 12 swirled around the hotel area briefly.

\***Gundlach's Hawk** *Accipiter gundlachi gundlachi*. Distributed throughout the country, but considered to be rare and local. In the *Threatened Birds of the Americas: The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book* (hereafter the Red Book) it mentions that this species is not considered specialized in its habitat requirements, but that since it feeds exclusively on birds and has been documented to take poultry, persecution may contribute to its decline. Additionally, loss of large tracts of forested habitat and the pet trade may also contribute to its decline. There are two subspecies in the country, with *A. g. gundlachi* found in western and central Cuba, and *A. g. wileyi* in eastern Cuba. At least one participant saw one at María La Gorda on 4 Nov.

\***Cuban Black Hawk** *Buteogallus gundlachii*. Common permanent resident in Cuba. The Cuban population is now considered to represent a distinct species, differentiated in part by its three-note “ba-tis-ta” call. Singles were in the Maria La Gorda area 4-5 Nov and Las Salinas 8 Nov; many were seen at Cayo Romano/Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov, and one was at Cayo Guillermo 13 Nov.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis solitudinis*. Common and widely distributed permanent resident in Cuba. Small numbers were seen on highway travel days.

### **GRUIFORMES: Rallidae**

**Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans caribaeus*. Common permanent resident. Four birds were calling (with one glimpsed) in mangroves on the western edge of the Hotel Cayo Coco grounds on 13 Nov.

**Sora** *Porzana carolina*. Common winter resident and transient. One was calling at La Cuchilla, east of Playa Giron, on 10 Nov.

**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica*. Common permanent resident. We saw one at La Boca, in the ponds on the west side of the highway across from the Criadero de Cocodrilos, on 9 Nov.

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula chloropus cerceris*. Common permanent resident. Small numbers were seen in the lagunas near Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov, and in the Zapata Swamp area 9-10 Nov.

**American Coot** *Fulica americana americana*. Abundant permanent and winter resident. The largest numbers were records in the lagunas near Maria La Gorda and at Niña Bonita Reservoir.

#### **GRUIFORMES: Aramidae**

**Limpkin** *Aramus guarauna pictus*. Common permanent resident in freshwater marshes and swamps. We found two in the wet fields east of Soplillar on 8 Nov and two more in marshes and pastures between La Boca and Palpite on 9 Nov; several were along roadsides at Cayo Coco 13 Nov.

#### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae**

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*. Abundant permanent resident and transient throughout. We encountered a few in small roadside wetlands, but the largest groups included 15 at Las Salinas on 8 Nov and 11 at the Cayo Coco sewage lagoons on 12 Nov.

#### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae**

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*. Common winter resident and transient within Cuba. A single bird was at Las Salinas on 8 Nov, and ten were at Cayo Romano and Cayo Coco 12 Nov.

**Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia*. Common summer resident and transient; local winter resident. We found three with other shorebirds at Cayo Romano on 12 Nov.

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*. Common winter resident and transient. A group of about 75 was on the flats at Cayo Romano 12 Nov.

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*. Uncommon and local winter resident and transient; more common on central northern cays. Five of these charming plovers were on the beach near the Marina Gaviota on 12 Nov; one had a metal USGS band on its left leg.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus ternominatus*. Common permanent resident; other subspecies are winter residents. One of the first birds we encountered in Cuba (from plane on the runway on 3 Nov), this proved to be widespread in small numbers (seen on 10 different days, with the largest numbers at Cayo Coco and Cayo Romano on 12 Nov).

#### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Jacanidae**

**Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa violacea*. Common permanent resident at marshes and lagoons. Two were at Soplillar on 8 Nov, and two more were at Palpite on 9 Nov.

#### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae**

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*. Common winter resident and transient.

**Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria solitaria*. Common winter resident and transient.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*. Common winter resident and transient. One or two were seen on five dates, at El Verraco, Las Salinas, Cayo Coco and Cayo Romano.

**Willet** *Tringa semipalmata*. Common permanent and winter resident; relative status of "Eastern" (nominata) and "Western" (*inornata*) subspecies unclear. One at Las Salinas 8

Nov was felt to be a Western Willet; several at Cayo Romano 12 Nov and two on Cayo Coco near the bridge to Cayo Guillermo on 13 Nov were not identified to subspecies.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*. Common winter resident and transient. Four were at Las Salinas 8 Nov.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*. Common winter resident and transient. Two were along the malecon in Havana on 3 Nov; up to 40 were in the Cayo Romano/Cayo Coco area on 12 Nov.

**Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus*. Common transient. A flock of 80 was seen in the flats on Cayo Romano near the turnoff for the road north to Cayo Paredon Grande.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*. Common winter resident and transient. Sixty-five were on the beach near Marina Gaviota on Cayo Coco 12 Nov.

**Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus ssp.* Common winter resident and transient. Two dowitchers presumed to be this species were on Cayo Romano 12 Nov.

**Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata*. Common winter resident. One was along the causeway from Cayo Romano to Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov.

### **CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae**

**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla atricilla*. This subspecies is found in the West Indies south to northern Venezuela and northern Brazil. Permanent resident and the most common gull along the Cuban coastline, we recorded them on 6 days with a high count of 35 at Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo on 13 November.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus graellsii*. Uncommon winter resident in recent years (not listed by Garrido et al.). An adult at the east end of Cayo Coco on 12 Nov was a known bird spotted by Paulino.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*. Uncommon winter resident on the coasts. Two were at fish ponds in the San Cristobal municipality (Pinar del Rio) on 4 Nov; up to three were at Cayo Coco and Cayo Romano 11-12 Nov, and two were at the Moron Fish Ponds on 13 Nov.

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus maximus*. Common permanent resident, winter visitant and transient on coasts. Seen on 8 days through the trip, with the largest numbers at Maria La Gorda and the Cayo Coco/Cayo Romano/Cayo Paredon Grande/Cayo Guillermo areas 12-13 Nov.

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis acuflavidus*. Common summer resident and transient; local winter resident on northern cays. Some 35 birds were counted east of the south end of the Cayo Coco causeway on 13 Nov.

### **COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (introduced). Common permanent resident throughout. Large numbers seen almost daily along highways and in settled areas.

**Scaly-naped Pigeon** *Patagioenas squamosa*. Only found on the Greater and Lesser Antilles, considered to be uncommon and very local in eastern Cuba and rather rare in western Cuba and Isla de Pinos. Three were at Cueva de Los Portales on 7 Nov, with excellent scope views of one perched bird.

**White-crowned Pigeon** *Patagioenas leucocephala*. Common permanent resident and transient. Small flocks were seen frequently over woodlands in Guanahacabibes and the

Zapata Swamp areas, with the largest numbers near Soplillar on 8 Nov; no more than 3 per day were seen in the cayos.

**Plain Pigeon** *Patagioenas inornata inornata*. Considered an endangered permanent resident found on Cuba primarily in 6-7 isolated populations. According to the **Red Book**, "...hunting and habitat loss have combined to reduce this once abundant and widespread pigeon of Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico to the situation where it is threatened everywhere and gravely at risk in Cuba (highest known population is ca. 100 pairs)." We had excellent success with this species at Maria La Gorda on 5-6 Nov, with as many as 20 on the latter date; some were very well-seen perched.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto* (introduced). Uncommon to fairly common permanent resident of larger urban areas. This species was introduced in the Bahamas in 1974 when ca. 100 birds were released (escaped?) from a pet dealer. The species subsequently invaded Florida, Cuba and much of the Lesser Antilles. Reported from Cuba in 1988, it was confirmed in 1990 and became well established in La Habana, Guanahacabibes Peninsula, and on Cayo Coco; since then it has spread over most of the country. Our largest numbers (a maximum of 120 on 14 Nov) were around Havana and on the drive west through Pinar del Rio, and again on the long drive from Santa Clara back to Havana.

**Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina insularis*. Common permanent resident. Seen every day, with a high count of 20 on 7 Nov

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica asiatica*. Common permanent resident (mainly in central and e. Cuba). Two flew over near El Verraco on 5 Nov and a flock of ten was seen in flight at Cueva de Los Portales on 7 Nov.

**Zenaida Dove** *Zenaida aurita zenaida*. Common permanent resident. Small numbers of this inconspicuous ground-foraging dove were seen daily from 4-10 Nov in Guanahacabibes and the Zapata Swamp area.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura macroura*. Abundant permanent resident throughout. Populations from North America overwinter commonly as well. Seen almost daily in large numbers, with a high count of 80 on the long drive from Havana to the Guanahacabibes Peninsula on 4 Nov.

**Key West Quail-Dove** *Geotrygon chryisia*. Uncommon to locally common permanent resident in Cuba and on the larger cays. It prefers the dryer forested habitats particularly near the coast rather than inland forests. We had excellent looks at one at Cueva Javali on Cayo Coco on 12 Nov; it frequented a small area where apparently food is provided, as this is a well-known site. One at Bermeja 10 Nov was pointed out by Orlando; it was not especially well-marked, and some were not convinced that Ruddy Quail-Dove was ruled out.

**\*\*Gray-fronted Quail-Dove** *Geotrygon caniceps*. Rare and local permanent resident on Cuba, although considered to be "common" in the Zapata Peninsula (Garrido and Kirkconnell 2000). Up to four were at Soplillar 8 Nov, with one fairly well-seen along the dirt trail; two were at Bermeja 10 Nov.

**Ruddy Quail-Dove** *Geotrygon montana montana*. Common permanent resident on Cuba and the larger cays, particularly on the northern coast. One was heard by Orlando at Bermeja on 10 Nov; one flew quickly across the road in front of the bus as we returned from Cueva Javali on Cayo Coco in the very late afternoon of 12 Nov.

\***Blue-headed Quail-Dove** *Starnoenas cyanocephala*. This Cuban endemic is considered rare and vulnerable, primarily in the central and eastern portions of the country. According to the **Red Book**, “... once common and widespread on its native Cuba, this ground-haunting pigeon has become extremely rare almost everywhere through the combined effects of hunting and the destruction of it (chiefly lowland) forest habitat.” Considered to be uncommon only on Guanahacabibes Peninsula, at La Güira and in the Zapata Peninsula (Garrido and Kirkconnell 2000). Prefers thick forested habitats with little understory. Orlando had up to four birds coming in to his seed as we arrived at Bermeja on 10 Nov, and we all had excellent looks at this striking bird endemic at the genus level. Giraldo heard one at Soplillar on 8 Nov.

### **CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae**

**Mangrove Cuckoo** *Coccyzus minor*. Locally common permanent resident on larger cays. We had good scope views of one in mangroves between Cayo Romano and Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov, and another was nearby on the return trip south from Cayo Paredon Grande.

\*\***Great Lizard-Cuckoo** *Coccyzus merlini*. Common permanent resident. We encountered this striking and bizarre species on 7 dates, with high of 12 individuals on 8 Nov in the Soplillar area and again on 10 Nov at Bermeja/La Cuchilla. Birds over most of mainland Cuba are of the nominate subspecies; those on Cayo Coco have been assigned to *C. m. santamariae*, but we failed to see the species there.

**Smooth-billed Ani** *Crotophaga ani*. Abundant permanent resident. We recorded this species nearly every day in appropriate habitat, missing it only on 5 Nov in the Maria La Gorda/Guanahacabibes area. High counts of up to 50 birds in a day were mostly made on days with long highway drives.

### **STRIGIFORMES: Tytonidae**

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba furcata*. Common permanent resident. We saw a roosting bird the evening of 10 Nov in trees around the small lake across from the Hotel Sol Cayo Coco.

### **STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae**

\***Bare-legged Owl** *Margarobyas lawrencii*. This was one of the “most-wanted” species for many of the participants. This endemic species is considered to be common in undisturbed forested habitats throughout the country, but can be difficult to locate. The taxonomy of this species has been dynamic, with Garrido and Kirkconnell (2000) calling this species *Otus lawrencii*, while others have this as *Megascops lawrencii*.

Phylogenetically it is not a screech-owl, and the A.O.U. (2006) and Howard and Moore (2003) both adopted the name *Gymnoglaux lawrencii*; for nomenclatural reasons a new monotypic genus *Margarobyas* was erected for this taxon in 2008 by Storrs Olson and William Suarez. We had good close views of birds at known roost sites at Bermeja on 10 Nov.

\***Cuban Pygmy-Owl** *Glaucidium siju siju*. Common permanent resident. Surprisingly common, this small woodland owl was found at La Chorrera on our first full day (4 Nov), and more were seen in the Maria La Gorda/La Bajada area 5 Nov, Cueva de Los Portales 7 Nov, Playa Larga 9 Nov and Soplillar 8 Nov.

### **CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae**

**nighthawk, sp.** *Chordeiles sp.* Antillean (*C. gundlachi*) is a common summer resident not expected after October; Common (*C. minor*) is an uncommon transient in spring (Apr-10 May) and fall (27 Aug-7 Oct). We watched a silent roosting bird high in a roadside tree between Playa Larga and Soplillar on 8 Nov, but we were not able to study the spread wing or the undertail coverts; its generally stark gray-brown plumage with virtually no buffy or rusty tones perhaps suggests it was a lingering migrant Common Nighthawk, but Antillean could not be ruled out for certain.

**Chuck-wills-widow** *Antristomus carolinensis*. Uncommon winter resident and transient. We glimpsed one in the trees at Hotel Las Caneyes in Santa Clara 9 Nov and had better looks at a roosting bird in trees at Hotel La Granjita in Santa Clara 12 Nov.

### **APODIFORMES: Apodidae**

**Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica*. Rare transient (10 Oct-Dec; Mar), commonest in coastal areas. Three birds that appeared to be this species were in flight over Maria La Gorda under intermittently rainy skies late on 4 Nov.

**\*\*Antillean Palm-Swift** *Tachornis phoenicobia iradii*. Common permanent resident. We recorded this species on 7 days total, in Havana, La Chorrera, Guanahacabibes, San Diego de Los Banos, and (counts up to 100) in Santa Clara; surprisingly, very few were in the Zapata Swamp/Bay of Pigs area (just 5 on 8 Nov and 3 on 9 Nov). They were most conspicuous where roosting in the thatch of patio or building roofs as at Hotel Mirador, Hotel Las Caneyes, and Hotel La Granjita.

### **APODIFORMES: Trochilidae**

**\*\*Cuban Emerald** *Chlorostilbon ricordii ricordii*. Common permanent resident in forests, coastal scrub and near human habitations where ornamental plantings provide food. We encountered them in small numbers daily from 3 to 14 Nov

**\*Bee Hummingbird** *Mellisuga helenae*. The world's smallest bird, this was also one of the most sought-after birds of the trip. It is considered to be rare and vulnerable in isolated populations in Cuba. We watched two birds foraging around flowering shrubs at El Verraco in Parque Nacional Guanahacabibes on 5 Nov, and one was perched on the fence line behind the hotel grounds at Maria La Gorda on 6 Nov. The latter bird was judged to be a male based on one or two iridescent red feathers on the back of the crown; adult males lose all or nearly all of the iridescent rose "hood" in their post-breeding molt, an unusual strategy in the "bee hummingbird clade" that includes most of the widespread USA species.

### **TROGONIFORMES: Trogonidae**

**\*Cuban Trogon** *Priotelus temnurus temnurus*. Common permanent resident in forests throughout; this is the Cuban national bird and is truly spectacular. Small numbers were found daily 5-10 November at Guanahacabibes, Cueva de Los Portales, and the various sites around the Zapata Swamp/Playa Larga/Bermeja; this species was absent from the cayos in Ciego de Avila Prov.

### **CORACIIFORMES: Todidae**

\***Cuban Tody** *Todus multicolor*. Todies, found outside the Greater Antilles only as fossils, are unique and highly sought-after West Indian endemics. Cuba's representative is a common permanent resident in semi-deciduous forests and coastal scrublands throughout. We saw them and heard their staccato calls on 9 days, especially in Guanahacabibes, La Güira, the Zapata Swamp region, and Santa Clara.

#### **CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae**

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*. Common winter resident and transient. Widespread in small numbers, we found these kingfishers on 10 days from 4 to 13 Nov.

#### **PICIFORMES: Picidae**

\*\***West Indian Woodpecker** *Melanerpes superciliaris superciliaris*. Common permanent resident throughout, primarily nesting in dead or dying palm trees. This species was fairly common and certainly conspicuous in most or all habitats that we birded, with birds detected on all but one day between 4 and 14 Nov.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus varius*. Common winter resident and transient. Singles were in the Playa Larga area 8 and 9 Nov, 4 were at Hotel Los Caneyes 11 Nov, and 2 were at La Granjita 14 Nov. Evidence of their drilling was seen elsewhere.

\***Cuban Green Woodpecker** *Xiphidiopicus percussus percussus*. Common endemic species to Cuba, in dry forests, pine, and semi-deciduous woodlands throughout. We first encountered this distinctive endemic on 4 Nov at La Chorrera; small numbers were noted subsequently in Guanahacabibes, near Soplillar, at Bermeja, and on Cayo Romano.

\*\***Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus chrysocaulosus*. Common permanent resident on Cuba, frequenting primarily forests and pine woodlands. One was very well seen at Palpite on 9 Nov, and others were at Cayo Coco 12-13 Nov.

\***Fernandina's Flicker** *Colaptes fernandinae*. Rare and vulnerable Cuban endemic which prefers forest edges in open areas, especially associated with palms. According to the **Red Book**, "...for reasons unclear, though probably related to habitat loss, this once common and widespread ground-feeding woodpecker, endemic to Cuba, has become very rare and localized, with only one relatively strong population (in the Zapata Swamp) and total numbers estimated at only 300 pairs." This species was a major target for most participants, and we were not disappointed as Joe Morlan spotted one from the moving bus as we rode from Bermeja to La Cuchilla the afternoon of 10 Nov; the bird remained perched openly for several minutes as we watched it through scopes.

#### **PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae**

\*\***Cuban Parakeet** *Psittacara euops*. Local and vulnerable permanent resident; within our itinerary, known only from the Zapata Peninsula area. A flock of about 25 was near the roadside at Bermeja on 10 Nov, providing excellent binocular and scope views; 5+ were seen at this same spot as we drove past on 11 Nov on our way toward Santa Clara.

\*\***Cuban Parrot** *Amazona leucocephala leucocephala*. Considered to be rare and vulnerable within Cuba, this species is now restricted to several isolated populations with apparently little or no genetic emigration or immigration; considered still common on Zapata Peninsula. This species is not considered to be threatened in the **Red Book**, but threats are probably similar to those for the Cuban Parakeet. Small flocks were

encountered in Guanahacabibes and in the Playa Larga areas, with especially good views at La Boca in the afternoon of 9 Nov.

### **FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae**

**Crested Caracara** *Caracara cheriway auduboni*. Considered to be rare and fairly local, but fairly common on northern cays. We found them daily from 7 to 13 Nov, with a high count of 12 on 10 Nov in the Playa Giron/Bermeja/La Cuchilla areas.

**\*\*American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius sparverioides*. Common permanent resident and winter visitor to Cuba. The Cuban race has two color morphs, with one having a rufous chest and belly and the other with a white chest and belly. We found this species daily from 4 to 14 Nov, with the majority being counted from the bus along highways. A high count of 20 was made on 13 Nov (Cayo Coco/Cayo Guillermo, and then along highways back toward Santa Clara). One or two birds with extensive streaking were likely from the migratory subspecies *F. s. sparverius* from North America. We never observed Cuban Kestrels hovering, although Giraldo stated that they do sometimes hover; they often flew rather directly with rapid wingbeats, unlike the slower and more buoyant wingbeats of North American kestrels.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius columbarius*. Uncommon winter resident and transient in Cuba. Small numbers were seen on a total of 8 dates, mostly in Guanahacabibes and the cayos.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*. Uncommon winter resident and transient (possibly breeds?). Two subspecies have been recorded in the country, *Falco peregrinus tundrius* and *F. p. anatum*. Two were in Havana on 3 Nov and two were at Cayo Coco 12 Nov

### **PASSERIFORMES: Tyrannidae**

**Eastern Wood-Pewee** *Contopus virens*. Common transient (as late as November). We encountered five individuals around Maria La Gorda and Parque Nacional Guanahacabibes 5-6 Nov, another at Soplillar 8 Nov, and one at Cueva de Javali on Cayo Coco 12 Nov; given that Garrido and Kirkconnell give 4 Nov as the late fall date, one wonders if some of these birds weren't wintering locally even though all supposedly winter in South America (casually north to Costa Rica).

**\*\*Cuban Pewee** *Contopus caribaeus caribaeus* (widespread form) and *C. c. morenoi* (southern Cuba primarily within the Zapata Swamp). Common permanent resident throughout the country. We encountered up to 8 individuals daily from 4 to 14 Nov.

**La Sagra's Flycatcher** *Myiarchus sagrae sagrae*. Common permanent resident to forests from the lowlands to high elevations throughout the country. Less conspicuous than most of their congeners, these birds nevertheless showed themselves on nine days between 4 and 13 Nov, with high counts of 4 in Guanahacabibes 5 Nov and again around Playa Larga 8 Nov.

**\*\*Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus caudifasciatus caudifasciatus*. Common permanent resident to forests, mangroves and swamps throughout Cuba. We encountered this species on 8 different days, often in more wooded areas than one would expect to see a kingbird.

### **PASSERIFORMES: Vireonidae**

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus griseus*. Common winter resident to thickets and dense shrubbery, Sep-Apr. One or two were encountered on five different dates at La Chorrera, Maria La Gorda/Guanahacabibes, Playa Larga, and Cayo Coco.

**\*\*Thick-billed Vireo** *Vireo crassirostris cubensis*. Common permanent resident on Cayo Paredon Grande. Amazingly limited in distribution in Cuba, this primarily Bahamian species was first encountered by song on 12 Nov in the mangroves and scrub between Cayo Romano and Cayo Paredon Grande; over the next hour we heard additional birds in the low palm-dominated scrub east of the Cayo Paredon Grande lighthouse and eventually pieced together great looks at several of these skulking birds.

**\*Cuban Vireo** *Vireo gundlachii gundlachii*. Common permanent resident, primarily in the lower elevations. This delightful bird was a common fixture in woodland bird flocks; we encountered it on eight days, with high counts of 10 in Maria La Gorda and Guanahacabibes 5 Nov and again in the Playa Giron/Bermeja area 10 Nov.

**Yellow-throated Vireo** *Vireo flavifrons*. Rare winter resident in semideciduous forest. We found single birds at La Chorrera on 4 Nov, La Bajada on 5 Nov, and Hotel Las Caneyes in Santa Clara 11 Nov, and hit the jackpot with 3 birds at Soplillar on 8 Nov.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae**

**Cuban Crow** *Corvus nasicus*. This is a near-endemic, with birds only being found on Cuba and also Grand Caicos Island. Common resident in isolated patches of habitat throughout Cuba, being especially common in the Zapata Peninsula region and also in the Sierra Najasa in Camagüey Province. Small numbers of these peculiarly-voiced corvids were in the Maria La Gorda/La Bajada area 4-6 Nov and around Playa Larga and La Boc 8-9 Nov.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae**

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*. Abundant winter resident throughout Cuba, particularly in the lowlands and in the wetlands and swamps of the Zapata Peninsula. We encountered small numbers 5-6 Nov at Maria La Gorda, but had surprisingly few swallows of any kind on the trip.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*. Common transient, rare winter resident with dates recorded between 13 August and 12 April. Four birds were seen at Maria La Gorda and El Verraco in far western Cuba 5-6 Nov.

**\*\*Cave Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva cavicola*. Common summer resident in Cuba, with dates extending from 29 Jan- 21 Oct. Despite the date span indicated by Garrido and Kirkconnell, we recorded 30-40 birds on 9 Nov as we dined at Casa Tiki in Playa Larga, with some birds actually flying under the concrete seawall there.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*. Common transient (Aug-Nov, Feb-Jun). About 6 birds were seen at Maria La Gorda 6 Nov, and two were at the eastern end of Cayo Coco on 12 Nov.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Troglodytidae**

**\*Zapata Wren** *Ferminia cerverai*. Endangered permanent resident with a very localized population present in the Zapata Peninsula near the Rio Hatiguanico and the small village of Santo Tomás. The **Red Book** mentions "... *this elusive bird is known only from within a 20 km radius of Santo Tomás in the Zapata Swamp, Cuba, where it appears to have*

suffered particularly from dry-season burning of its savanna-like habitat and perhaps from introduced predators.” This is one of the most difficult of the Cuban endemics to find, and it took much effort to finally lure a singing bird into view at La Turba north of Playa Larga on 9 Nov. At this site there is an extensive “sea” of sawgrass punctuated with small clumps of shrubs; viewing that habitat across a small canal lined with low trees we were able to get reasonably good looks as well as hear an extended singing session.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Sylviidae**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea caerulea*. Common winter resident throughout the country in most habitats from 10 Aug-1 May. We encountered one at La Chorrera 4 Nov, and several birds 8-11 Nov in the Zapata Swamp/Playa Larga/Bermeja areas. On the return trip on 14 Nov we had one at La Granjita in Santa Clara and two at Fiesta Campesina near Jaguey Grande.

\***Cuban Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila lembeyi*. Common but local permanent resident in a few coastal regions. This highly sought-after localized endemic was encountered only on the roadside scrub between Cayo Romano and Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov, where two pairs moved back and forth across the road.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

\***Cuban Solitaire** *Myadestes elisabeth elisabeth*. Common endemic, but confined to the far eastern and far western mountains. Cueva de Los Portales is the key site for this species in western Cuba, and we were delighted to hear at least three birds singing outside of the cave entrance, with excellent scope views of one.

**Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*. Rare transient (14 Sep-21 Nov; 8 Feb-18 Apr). One was seen briefly at Soplillar on 8 Nov.

\*\***Red-legged Thrush** *Turdus plumbeus schistaceus* (in eastern Cuba with gray bellies) and *Turdus plumbeus rubripes* (central and western Cuba with reddish-brown bellies). Common permanent resident to pine woods and semideciduous. We recorded *T. p. rubripes* daily 3-14 Nov, with double-digits on at least three days (including up to 15 on our first day in Havana).

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Mimidae**

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*. Common winter resident and transient within Cuba. Catbirds were found on seven days, in Havana, Guanahacabibes, the Zapata Swamp region and the cayos.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos orpheus*. Common permanent resident throughout. One of the commonest passerines in Cuba, we encountered up to 30 in a day every day from 3 to 14 Nov.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Parulidae**

**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapilla furvior*. Common winter resident and transient. Encountered on nine days, with counts of 1 to 4 per day.

**Worm-eating Warbler** *Helmitheros vermivorus*. While considered to be a common winter resident and transient within Cuba, generally only encountered in very small numbers. One was seen at Beremeja on 10 Nov.

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis*. Common winter resident and transient. Encountered on nine days, with high count of 21 on 9 Nov in the Zapata Swamp/Playa Larga area.

**Louisiana Waterthrush** *Parkesia motacilla*. Common winter resident and transient at shaded rivers, creeks. We encountered two at La Güira on 7 Nov (one in Che Guevara's cave and one at Hacienda Cortina); another was at La Boca on 9 Nov.

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia*. Common winter resident and transient. Encountered on none days, with counts of 1 to 5 per day.

**Tennessee Warbler** *Vermivora peregrina*. Uncommon transient; in fall 14 Sep-14 Nov. We found only three on the trip.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas trichas*. Common winter resident and transient. Seen daily in the Zapata Swamp/Bay of Pigs region and the cayos; high count of 17 on 9 Nov around La Turba and Playa Larga.

**Hooded Warbler** *Setophaga citrina*. A male was seen briefly on the trail behind the Guanahacabibes park entrance at La Bajada on 5 Nov.

**American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla*. "Candelita." Common winter resident and transient. We found them ubiquitous, recording them every day from 3 to 14 Nov with daily counts as high as 35.

**Cape May Warbler** *Dendroica tigrina*. Common winter resident and transient. We encountered them on nine days, with counts of 1 to 6 per day; many of our best sightings were at Maria La Gorda.

**Northern Parula** *Parula americana*. Common winter resident and transient within Cuba. Found on ten different days, with counts from 2 to 7.

**Magnolia Warbler** *Dendroica magnolia*. Common winter resident and transient. We had 1-2 birds on five different days at Guanahacabibes and around the Zapata Swamp/Bay of Pigs area.

**Yellow Warbler** *Dendroica petechia gundlachi* (resident subspecies). Common permanent resident along the coast of Cuba, and also a common North American transient. Residents live in coastal vegetation, especially mangroves, while transients are most often found in forests and gardens. Resident "Golden" birds were at Las Salinas (5 on 8 Nov) and the cayos; one at La Bajada on 6 Nov was not identified to subspecies group.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** *Dendroica caerulescens caerulescens*. Common winter resident and transient. Encountered all twelve full days in the field, with counts from 1 to 11 (the last on 8 Nov in the Playa Larga area).

**Palm Warbler** *Dendroica palmarum palmarum*. Considered to be an abundant winter resident and transient throughout Cuba, and we certainly reinforced that definition. Double figures were found every day 1-13 Nov (with only 8 on the 14 Nov travel day!), with 75 estimated in the Maria La Gorda/Guanahacabibes area 5 Nov.

**Olive-capped Warbler** *Dendroica pityophila*. Common, but a very local permanent resident in the far western and the far eastern mountains. We found three birds (and experienced "warbler neck") in the pines on the ridge above Cueva de Los Portales on 7 Nov and another at nearby Hacienda Cortina.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Dendroica coronata coronata*. Uncommon and irregular winter resident and transient. Single "Myrtle" Warblers were at La Turba 9 Nov, Cayo Romano 12 Nov, and Cayo Coco 13 Nov.

**Yellow-throated Warbler** *Dendroica dominica*. Common winter resident and transient in Cuba, we recorded this species on all twelve full field days, with a high count of 9 on 11 Nov.

**Prairie Warbler** *Dendroica discolor*. Common winter resident and transient. We found from 1 to 9 per day on all days in the Zapata Swamp/Bay of Pigs area and the Cayos.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** *Dendroica virens*. Uncommon winter resident and transient in Cuba, we encountered 2-3 at La Chorrera on 4 Nov, two around La Bajada on 6 Nov, 1-3 per day in the Playa Larga/Playa Giron region 8-10 Nov.

**\*Yellow-headed Warbler** *Teretistris fernandinae*. Common permanent resident but restricted to forests and thickets of central and western Cuba. [Note: this species and the following are almost certainly not parulids; they differ structurally and lack a true song (vocalizations being high, thin raspy notes similar to those of many thraupids; some have given them family rank as Teretistridae.)] We found up to 12 per day in the Guanahacabibes region 5-6 Nov and smaller numbers in Matanzas Prov. 8-10 Nov. They were invariably in mixed flocks with North American migrants (and, often, Cuban Vireos).

**\*Oriente Warbler** *Teretistris fornsi*. Common permanent resident but restricted to forests and thickets of central and eastern Cuba and the larger central-northern cays. We found a total of ten on 12 Nov on Cayo Romano, Cayo Paredon Grande, and Cueva de Javali on Cayo Coco.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Thraupidae**

**Red-legged Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes cyaneus ssp.* (presumed to have been introduced). Overall a rare permanent resident, but locally common in several pockets of habitat in the far west and the far southeast. We had a brief sighting of up to 5 birds near the entrance to Cueva de Los Portales on 7 Nov.

**\*\*Western Spindalis** *Spindalis zena pretrei*. Common permanent resident, this endemic subspecies was found on 7 days, with a high count of four on 5 and 6 Nov in the Guanahacabibes region; also seen in the Zapata Swamp region and the Cayo Coco/Cayo Romano area.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Emberizidae**

**\*\*Cuban Bullfinch** *Melopyrrha nigra nigra*. Common permanent resident on Cuba, it is also a popular cage bird because of its singing abilities. There is a current AOU motion to split Cuban *nigra* and Grand Cayman *taylori* into separate species which, if accepted, would make this another Cuban endemic. When not singing these birds are amazingly inconspicuous, but we managed to find them on seven days, with a high count of ten on 5 Nov in the Maria La Gorda/Guanahacabibes area.

**\*Cuban Grassquit** *Tiaris canora*. Common permanent resident only in the far east provinces, it is rapidly declining in many of the areas in the central and western portions of the country due to habitat alteration and the cage bird trade. This endemic species does not appear to be closely related to the other grassquits and is now often placed in the monotypic genus *Phonipara*. Two were well-seen at La Chorrera on 4 Nov.

**Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivacea*. Common permanent resident. Small groups were found daily at and near Maria La Gorda (up to 16 on 5 Nov), and we also encountered them near Soplillar and at Bermeja and La Cuchilla.

\***Zapata Sparrow** *Torreornis inexpectata varonai*. Local, highly vulnerable and rare endemic species which is found in three highly isolated populations. The **Red Book** mentions "... three racially distinct populations of this scrub-dwelling emberizid occur in Cuba, in the Zapata Swamp, in the Cayo Coco region (subspecies *varonai*, which we saw), and on a small stretch of the south-east coast, and the total numbers appear small; each population occupies a somewhat different habitat and faces a different threat." This was undoubtedly one of the most sought-after species for the trip, and we were not disappointed. We found three birds along the roadside at Cayo Romano on 12 Nov, with close and leisurely views.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Cardinalidae**

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra rubra*. Rare winter resident and transient. We found single birds at La Chorrera on 4 Nov and Maria La Gorda on 5 Nov.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Rare winter resident and transient. Two were at Maria La Gorda 5 Nov, with one the next day; another was east of Soplillar on 8 Nov.

**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea caerulea*. Common transient and very rare winter resident. Four were seen at Maria La Gorda 5 and 6 Nov.

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea*. Common winter resident and transient in Cuba. Up to ten per day were seen 4-6 Nov at Maria La Gorda.

**Painted Bunting** *Passerina ciris ciris*. Common transient and rare winter resident. Most of the group saw two along the road on Cayo Paredon Grande on 12 Nov.

**Dickcissel** *Spiza Americana*. Very rare transient (all dates 3 Sep-23 Nov). Giraldo Alayon saw one at Maria La Gorda 5 Nov.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Icteridae**

\***Red-shouldered Blackbird** *Agelaius assimilis assimilis*. Generally rare, though locally common in western and central Cuba. After having heard distant birds at La Turba on 8 Nov, and after much additional searching between La Boca and Palpite and at La Cuchilla, we finally had good looks at 6+ birds at La Cuchilla (east of Bermeja) on the afternoon of 10 Nov.

\*\***Tawny-shouldered Blackbird** *Agelaius humeralis scopulus*. Common permanent resident, primarily in open forests and along the edges of forests. A few were around the hotel in Havana 3-4 Nov, and we saw more north of Palpite 9 Nov and at Bermeja 10 Nov.

\*\***Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna hippocrepis*. Common permanent resident. A few were glimpsed along the highway in Pinar del Rio 4 Nov and 6 Nov, but our best looks were at La Cuchilla 10 Nov and more were seen along the highways in central Cuba 11 Nov; one was well-seen at Fiesta Campesina 14 Nov. We only briefly heard singing, but studies suggest that the song of this endemic Cuban taxon are more suggestive of Western Meadowlark than Eastern; not only may the Cuban Meadowlark deserve species status, but there have been suggestions that a different distinct taxon is found in the highlands of easternmost Cuba.

\***Cuban Blackbird** *Dives atrovioleacea*. Common permanent resident throughout. Many recent authorities (including Howard and Moore checklist, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.) separate this endemic species into a monotypic genus, *Ptiloxena*. A ubiquitous bird on the island, with counts of

up to 100 per day; interestingly, it is absent from the cays and thus we saw none on 12 Nov.

**\*\*Greater Antillean Grackle** *Quiscalus niger gundlachii* and *Q. n. caribaeus*. Abundant permanent resident. There were two subspecies involved on this trip, with *Q. n. caribaeus* being found in far western Cuba (Guanahacabibes) at the beginning of the trip, and *Q. n. gundlachii* being found in the central and eastern portions of the country toward the end of the trip. Very common throughout (though we failed to see them at Maria La Gorda/Guanahacabibes), with counts of 20 to 75 per day.

\* **Cuban Oriole** *Icterus melanopsis*. Common permanent resident in Cuba, primarily in the lowlands throughout. Now split from other Greater Antillean populations (which had been united under the name *I. dominicensis*); earlier, Middle American *I. prosthomelas* was included with the Antillean taxa in a single widespread species known as the “Black-cowled Oriole.” We found multiple birds daily at Maria La Gorda (up to 11 on 6 Nov), and others in Matanzas Prov. and the cayos.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus domesticus* (introduced). Common permanent resident throughout Cuba. We found them commonly in all settled areas (including the cayos), with counts of up to 100 per day.

#### **PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae**

**Tricolored Munia** *Lonchura malacca* (introduced). Locally common and increasing resident. This recently colonizing species was encountered in Pinar del Rio Prov. on 4 Nov when a flock of about 75 flew across the highway and another 15 were at the lunch stop at Las Palmares.

### **REFERENCES**

Collar, N.J., L.P. Gonzaga, N. Krabbe, A. Madroño, L.G. Naranjo, T.A. Parker III, and D.C. Wege. 1992. *Threatened Birds of the Americas: The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, part 2. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.

Dickinson, E.C. (Editor). 2003. *The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Garrido, O.H., and A. Kirkconnell. 2000. *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Navarro, N. 2015. *Endemic birds of Cuba*. Ediciones Nuevos Mundos.