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A TRIP REPORT FOR A QUICK BIRDING TRIP TO TRINIDAD

October 21 to 23rd 2011

Leader: Martyn Kenefick

With: Neal Clarke, David Garner, Nigel Hewitt, Jeff Hopkins, Barry Walker

The Agenda

October 20th: Jeff arrives in Port of Spain, Trinidad, after dark.

October 21st: Jeff and Martin go birding at Sudama Steps and in the fields around Debe in the morning. In the afternoon, Neal and Barry arrive in Port of Spain Trinidad, meet Martin and Jeff and wait for Nigel and David to arrive and drive to Grand Riviere arriving after dark.

October 22nd: Piping Guan quest along Monte Video Trace – we spend most of the morning and finally connect with the Guans at around 11:00am. Afternoon visit to the Caroni Swamp and boat trip, where we destroy a bridge, and then to Asa Wright [Nature](#) Centre for the night.

October 23rd: Morning and lunch at Asa Wright and then transfer to the airport for flights to Georgetown with a stop for Lilac-tailed parrotlets along the way.

The Key to the Birdlist

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol *

RED – IUCN RED LIST CATEGORY

SACC = South American Classification Committee

IOC = International Ornithological Congress

RR – Regional endemic and range restricted species

E - Endemic

TINAMOUS

Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui**

GUANS AND CURRASOWS

E Trinidad Piping-Guan *Pipile pipile*

The bird we had come to see and we struggled, finally getting great looks at 2 birds late morning thanks to “Ivan the Good”. The IOC recognizes 4 species but says *Pipile cumanensis* is a ssp of *P. pipile* (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001); H&M, BLI and SACC recognize as species; SACC needs proposal to lump



IBIS

RR Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*

Wow quite a show at the Caroni Swamp- an unbelievable colour as 1000+ came in to roost – fantastic!

HERONS AND EGRETS

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Many records along the roads



Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Two seen

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Several individuals seen here and there

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Common along the coast

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Many records along the roads, always in areas cleared for cattle grazing.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

Common at the Sudama Steps

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

6 in the mangroves at the Coroni Swamp

Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius*

1 of this nocturnal Heron in the mangroves at the Caroni Swamp

FRIGATEBIRDS

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

Common at Grand Riviere

PELICANS

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

A few individuals along the coast

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Daily views in all locations.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Daily views

OSPREY

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Two seen by the group with a few seen by Jeff and Martyn at Sudama. Migrants from North America. Pandion in Greek mythology was king of Ithaca, whose tragic daughters Philomela and Procne were turned into a Nightingale and Swallow respectively. There is a genus of Martins named for Procne.

HAWKS AND EAGLES

Grey-headed Kite *Leptodon cayanensis*

One seen

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus*

Just one of this monkey following specialist.

Long-winged Harrier *Circus buffoni*

One bird seen by Jeff and Martyn on the way to breakfast in Debe

Common Black-Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus*

Two in the mangroves along the coast. The SACC says "Evidence for treating *Buteogallus subtilis* (Mangrove Black Hawk) which does not occur in Trinidad, as a species separate from *Buteogallus anthracinus* is weak. It was treated as a full species by Stresemann & Amadon (1979), Thiollay (1994), AOU (1998), and Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2001), following Amadon (1961) and Monroe (1963, 1968); see Howell & Webb (1995), Stiles & Skutch (1989), and Ridgely et al. (2001), and especially Clark (2007) for opposing view. It was considered a synonym of *B. anthracinus* by Hellmayr & Conover (1949) and as a subspecies of *B. anthracinus* by Friedmann (1950). SACC [proposal](#) passed to remove species rank for *subtilis*. The two were treated as forming a superspecies by Sibley & Monroe (1990) and Thiollay (1994). Stresemann & Amadon (1979) suspected that *Buteogallus subtilis* and *B. aequinoctialis* form a superspecies. However Restall 2006 treats them as two separate species.

Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus*

Seen at Sudama (and elsewhere)

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus*

One only of these Turkey Vulture imitators

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus*

Two soaring at Grand Riviere

FALCONS AND CARACARAS

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*

Common

Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis*

Seen on two days

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrines*

2 seen on two separate days. Boreal migrant

RAILS & GALLINULES

Purple Gallinule *Porphyryla martinica*

Common at Sudama Steps

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeatus*

A few seen at Sudama Steps

LIMPKIN

LIMPKIN *Aramus guarauna**

One heard calling at Sudama Steps

PLOVERS

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*

JACANAS

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*

Common in wet areas like Sudama Steps

SANDPIPERS & SNIPES

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

A few at the Sudama Steps

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*

Fairly common

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

One mixed in with the next species at Sudama Steps

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

A few working a puddle in the parking lot at Sudama Steps

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*

One on a small flooded area at Grand Riviere. A Boreal migrant

GULLS AND TERNS

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

One only

Common Tern *Sterna hirunda*

20 + - adults and immatures

Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*

A few seen at Sudama Steps

PIGEONS AND DOVES

Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa*

4 seen in total, with many more heard. Note that recent research has shown that the genus *Columba* is paraphyletic, with New World taxa being more closely related to *Streptopelia* than to Old World *Columba* pigeons. This is consistent with differences between New World and Old World *Columba* in terms of morphology, serology and behaviour. The suggestion was made to place all New World forms in the genus *Patagioenas*, and the AOU recently adopted this change in its latest checklist supplement.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

Common

White-tipped Dove *Leptoptila verreauxi*

One in more scrubby areas

Gray-fronted Dove *Leptoptila rufaxilla*

Around 4 seen at Asa Wrights

PARROTS

RR Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerinus*

Large flocks seen at Sudama Steps

Lilac-tailed Parrotlet *Touit betavicus*

A tricky bird to see well anywhere. We had 6 at Asa Wrights and then 2 seen really well at a nearby town park stakeout! Very nice indeed

Orange-winged Amazon *Amazonas amazonica*

Very common

CUCKOOS AND ANIS

Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*

One bird responded to tape and perched up nicely at Sudama Steps

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*

Many records of this widespread Cuckoo

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

Various records, especially along the road in disturbed areas

OWLS

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum**

One heard

NIGHTJARS AND NIGHTHAWKS

Short-tailed Nighthawk *Leurocalis semitorquatus*

Seen at dawn during the Pawi hunt

POTOOS

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

One at a roost at Caroni Swamp

SWIFTS

Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyuran*

Common

Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicauda*

Common

HUMMINGBIRDS

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*

Severla at the Asa Wright feeders

Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus*

One seen on consecutive days

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*

A few

Little Hermit *Phaethornis longuemareus*

Fairly Common with 7 seen

Green-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis*

2 seen in the Caroni Swamp – a male and a female

Tufted Coquette *Lophornis ornatus*

A female

Blue-chinned Sapphire *Chlorestes notata*

Common at the feeders

White-chested Emerald *Amazilia chionopectus*

Common with around 20 seen

Coppery-rumped Humingbird *Amazilia tobaci*

Common at the Asa Wright feeders

TROGONS & QUETZALS

Green-backed Trogon *Trogon viridis*

One seen. *Trogon chinourus* (White-tailed Trogon) is a split from *T. viridis* Ridgely & Greenfield (2001) considered the subspecies *chionurus* of the Chocó region to be a separate species from *Trogon viridis*; followed by Hilty (2003); Genetic data (DaCosta & Klicka 2008) showed that *chionurus* is more closely related to *T. bairdii* than either are to Amazonian *T. viridis*. The IOC & SACC accepts the split

RR Guianan Trogon *Trogon violaceus*

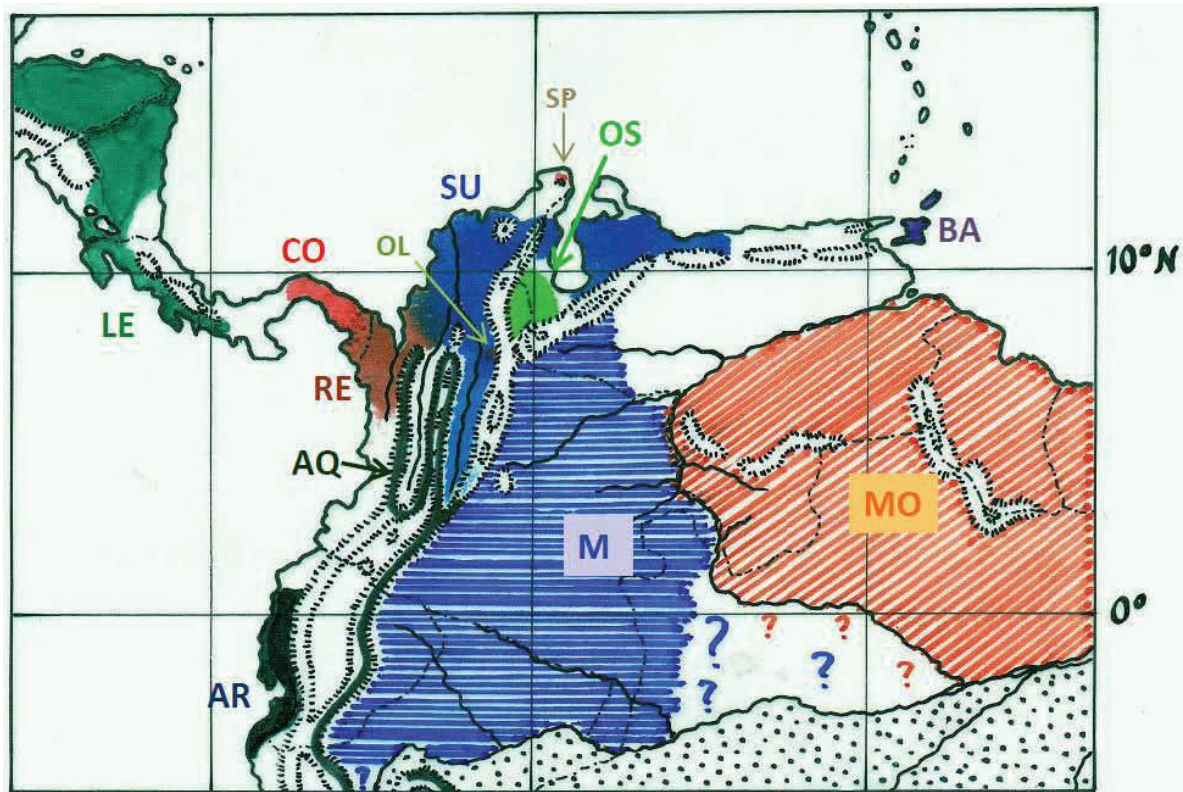
2-3 seen. Ridgely & Greenfield (2001) considered *caligatus* of Middle America and northwestern South America to be a separate species from *Trogon violaceus*, Gartered Trogon, and this was followed by Hilty (2003); SACC proposal to recognize this split did not pass because of insufficient published data. Genetic data (DaCosta & Klicka 2008) indicate that *caligatus* Gartered Trogon is basal to a group that includes Amazonian *T. ramonianus* (Amazonian Trogon), *T. curucui*, and *T. surrucura* (and that Amazonian *violaceus* may be paraphyletic with respect to the latter two species). SACC proposal was passed to recognize *caligatus* Gartered Trogon and Amazonian Trogons as species, which the IOC already accepted.

MOTMOTS

E Trinidad Motmot *Momotus bahamensis*

Our second Trinidad endemic seen at the feeders at Asa Wright and along the forest trails





Distributions of the forms of the “*Momotus momota*” complex treated in this study: From northwest to southeast, LE = *lessonii*; CO = *conexus*; RE = *reconditus*; SU = *subrufescens*; OL = *olivaresi*; SP = *spatha*; OS = *osgoodi*; BA = *bahamensis*; AQ = *aequatorialis*; AR = *argenticinctus*; MI = *microstephanus*; MO = *momota*. Note the high degree of geographical replacement among taxa; only *conexus*, *reconditus* and *subrufescens* overlap appreciably (and *olivaresi* is indistinguishable from *subrufescens*).

So there are now 5 recognised species

***Momotus lessonii* Blue-diademed Motmot – Central America**

***Momotus subrufescens* Whooping Motmot - Lowlands of NW South America west of Andes to N Peru**

***Momotus bahamensis* Trinidad Motmot - Trinidad**

***Momotus momota* Amazonian Motmot - The Amazon Basin and the Guianan Shield**

***Momotus aequatorialis* Andean Motmot – The Andes**

KINGFISHERS

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*

Common. *Megaceryle torquata* and *M. alcyon* have been placed in the genus *Ceryle* in many classifications (e.g., Meyer de Schauensee 1970, AOU 1983, 1998), but most classifications have followed Fry (1980) in restricting *Ceryle* to Old World *C. rudis* (e.g., Sibley & Monroe 1990, Fry & Fry 1992, Woodall 2001). Recent genetic data (Moyle 2006) indicate that Old World *Ceryle rudis* is the sister to *Chloroceryle*, and so *Megaceryle* must be recognized if *Chloroceryle* is maintained as a genus.

JACAMARS

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*

3 seen at forest edge

BARBETS AND TOUCANS

Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus*

Common

PICULETS AND WOODPECKERS

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*

One seen

Red-rumped Woodpecker *Venilornis kirkii*

One seen at Asa Wrights. Contrary to some experts, not named after Capt. James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos*

One seen

OVENBIRDS

Pale-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis albescens*

A few seen in the fields around Debe by Jeff and Martyn

Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*

Common at Sudama Steps

Gary-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis*

All Leaf-tossers can be tricky to see but this one responded splendidly to playback just where Martyn had told us it would!

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*.

One seen at Asa Wrights

Straight-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus picus*

One seen in lightly wooded areas. The SACC says "*Xiphorhynchus picus* and *X. kienerii* (= *necopinus*) were formerly (e.g., Cory & Hellmayr 1925, Zimmer 1934c, Pinto 1937, Phelps & Phelps 1950a) treated in a separate genus, *Dendroplex*, but this was merged into *Xiphorhynchus* by Peters (1951). Wetmore (1972), however, maintained *Dendroplex* as a separate genus based not only on bill shape but on (unstated) cranial characters. Move Straight-billed Woodcreeper and Zimmer's Woodcreeper from *Xiphorhynchus* to *Dendroplex* (Aleixo 2002, Aleixo et al 2007, SACC)

Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus sussurans**

ANTBIRDS

Great Antshrike *Taraba major*

3 seen in total

Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus canadensis*

Sakesphorus is Greek and means "shield bearing" referring to the black breast patch of this species. *Canadensis* referring to Canada is erroneously used here and should have been "*cayanensis*"

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*

Seen during the piping-guan search and also at Asa Wright

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis*

One male seen at Asa Wright

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*

Common mid-story Antwren. Willis (1984b), Ridgely & Tudor (1994), Hilty (2003), and Zimmer & Isler (2003) noted that vocal differences among several subspecies of *Myrmotherula axillaris* suggest that more than one species is involved.

Silvered Antbird *Scateria naevia*

A nice pair seen whilst looking for Piping Guans – very different plumage from Amazonian birds

White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes**

Common by voice and 3 seen of this skulking understory Antbird

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Southern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum*

2 seen and many heard

Forest Elaenia - *Myiopagis gaimardii* - This non-descript bird is usually best told by its voice. We heard it several times and saw it well on occasions. Named for Paul Gaimard – French surgeon, explorer and naturalist 1793-1858. Many medical men of the days of the great sailing ships and the Napoleonic wars were "natural philosophers" e.g Charles Darwin.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

Several seen at Sudama Steps

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginous*

2 in total seen on different days

Yellow-Olive Flatbill *Tolmomyias sulphureus berlepschi*

Various sightings of individuals of race *berlepschi* which is endemic to Trinidad and a possible future split and endemic for Trinidad. This is another species under study and may involve more than one species. Ridgely & Greenfield (2001) used the English group name "Flatbill" for the species of *Tolmomyias*, returning to a name used by Cory & Hellmayr (1925). The IOC calls this genus "Flatbill" which I find outrageous as we

already have a genus of Flycatchers called Flatbills (*Rhynchocyclus*). Birds of Peru returns to the non-committal "Flycatcher" for this genus as does Restall 2007

Ochre-lored Flatbill *Tolmomyias flaviventris aurulentus*

Several seen. On our list it was down as Yellow-breasted Flatbill. The SACC says "*Tolmomyias flaviventris* almost certainly involves more than one species; see Bates et al. (1992) and Ridgely & Tudor (1994). The subspecies *viridiceps* is almost certainly a distinct species Olive-faced Flatbill, and was so considered by Ridgely et al. (2001) and Hilty (2003). However, Zimmer (1939a) considered them conspecific because the subspecies he considered the subspecies *subsimitis* and *dissors* to represent taxa that were intermediate between the two, and this treatment was followed by Fitzpatrick (2004) in the absence of published data supporting a split." The IOC splits this.

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum maculatum*

Several of this mangrove specialist seen at Sudama Steps

Pied Water-Tyrant *Fluvicola pica*

More common than the next species at Sudama Steps

White-headed Marsh-Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala*

A few seen at Sudama Steps

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus*

The expected myiarchus at Sudama Steps

Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus*

One seen

Bright-rumped Atilla *Attila spadiceus**

Great Kiskadee - *Pitangus sulphuratus*

Many during this trip. Usually in open or edge habitat

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua*

2. Usually in moist to dry forest

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus*

Pretty common

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

Common and widespread

Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*

One on our second day in Trinidad

RR Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano*

One seen at Asa Wright after a couple hours of hearing this ventriloquist call from close by

MANAKINS

White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus*

Common

Golden-headed Manakin *Pipra erythrocephala*

A few seen- pretty

TITYRAS

In this classification, the genera *Tityra* through *Phibalura* were formerly placed tentatively in the Cotingidae, following Prum et al. (2000). They had formerly been scattered among the Tyrannidae, Cotingidae, and Pipridae. Prum and Lanyon (1989) and Sibley & Ahlquist (1990) found that *Tityra*, *Schiffornis*, and *Pachyramphus* formed a distinct group, separate from the rest of the Tyrannidae; Sibley & Ahlquist (1990) proposed that they were most closely related to core Tyrannidae than to other tyrannoid families such as the Cotingidae or Pipridae. More recent genetic data (Johansson et al. 2002, Chesser 2004, Barber & Rice 2007) confirm that the genera *Tityra* through at least *Pachyramphus* form a monophyletic group, but Chesser (2004) found that this group is more closely related to the Pipridae than to the Cotingidae or Tyrannidae. SACC proposal passed to remove from Cotingidae (and place as Incertae Sedis or as separate family, Tityridae). Barber & Rice (2007) not only confirmed the monophyly of the group but also proposed elevation to family rank. SACC proposal passed to recognize Tityridae. Within this group, Barber & Rice (2007) found genetic evidence for two major groups: (a) *Laniisoma*, *Laniocera*, and *Schiffornis*, and (b) *Iodopleura*, *Tityra*, *Xenopsaris*, and *Pachyramphus*.

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus**

Black-tailed Tityra *Tityra cayana*

One seen

VIREOS AND GREENLETS

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis*

Heard by the group and seen at Sudama Steps

Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*

Again heard commonly and seen in response to playback at Asa Wright

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS

Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*

Common

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

Fairly Common

White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer*

Common at Sudama. Scattered sightings at Caroni Swamp

WRENS

Rufous-breasted Wren *Pheugoipedioides rutilus*

Nice looks at this pretty songster and vine tangle lover.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Many authors (e.g., Hellmayr 1934, Pinto 1944, Phelps & Phelps 1950a) formerly treated Neotropical mainland populations as a separate species *T. musculus*; see also Brumfield and Capparella (1996); this treatment was followed by Brewer (2001) and Kroodsma & Brewer (2005).

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*

Common

THRUSHES

Cocoa Thrush *Turdus fumigates*

The common garden thrush

Bare-eyed Thrush *Turdus nudigenis*

One kept sneaking into the feeders at Asa Wrights. This Skulker was also seen at Sudama Steps

White-necked Thrush *Turdus albicollis*

Commonly heard and one seen

FINCHES

Violaceous Euphonia *Euphonia violacea*

Fairly common. The genus name means "fine-voiced"

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

A few of this established exotic were seen in the fields around Debe

NEW WORLD WARBLERS

Tropical Parula *Parula pitiayum*

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*

Numerous at Sudama Steps

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata*

One seen

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

One individual of this Boreal migrant seen. Also common at Sudama Steps

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia novboracensis*

Another boreal migrant of which 4 were seen

OROPENDOLAS, ORIOLES AND BLACKBIRDS

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

A few of these boreal migrants seen in the fields around Debe

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Agelaius icterocephalus*

Fairly common at Sudama Steps

Carib Grackle *Qiscalus lugubris*

Common

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis*

One seen

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*

A few of this striking species here and there

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*

Common

BANANAQUIT

Bannanquit *Coereba flaveola*

A few seen but not common. Will it be split? – One in the split bank!

TANAGERS & ALLIES

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus leuctuosus*

One seen

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus*

Common

Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo*

Many records in edge of disturbed habitat and secondary growth

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* Daily sightings *Episcopus* – a reference to the episcopal blue plumage of this species

Palm Tanager - *Thraupis palmarum*

Common

Turquoise Tanager *Tangara mexicana*

Common. Not found in Mexico

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

2 seen

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

Common

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus*

Common

Bicolored Conebill *Conirostrum bicolour*

Several seen in the mangroves

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*

Common at Sudama Steps. Uncommon elsewhere

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager *Habia rubica*

4 at Asa Wright

GROSBEAKS AND SALTATORS

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*

Fairly common

MAMMALS AND REPTILES

Common Agouti *Dasyprocta fuliginosa*

Common

Golden Tiger Lizard *Tupinambis negropunctatus*



