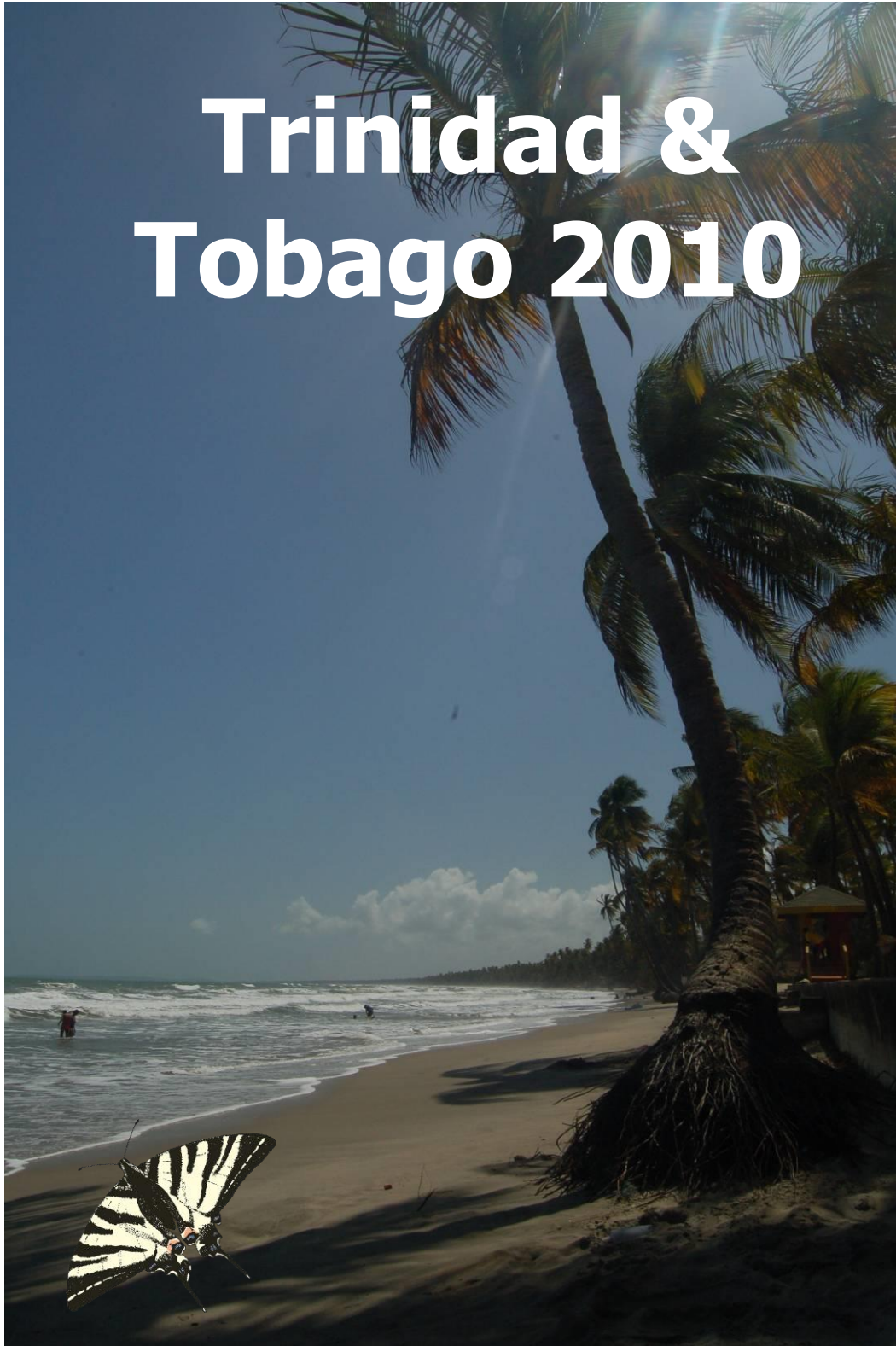


WILDLIFE TRAVEL

Trinidad & Tobago 2010



Trinidad and Tobago Trip Report, 3rd to 15th February 2010

#	DATE	LOCATIONS & NOTES
1	3 rd Feb	Travel Day
2	4 th Feb	Bon Accord Treatment Ponds, Tobago Plantation, Grafton Nature Reserve, Adventure Park, Cuffie River Nature Retreat
3	5 th Feb	Tobago National Rainforest Reserve
4	6 th Feb	Cuffie River, Little Tobago
5	7 th Feb	Cuffie River Nature Retreat
6	8 th Feb	Cuffie River and travel to Asa Wright Centre
7	9 th Feb	Asa Wright Centre
8	10 th Feb	Blanchisseuse Road, Morne La Croix
9	11 th Feb	Arima Agriculture Research Centre, Manzanilla, Nariva Swamp Nature Reserve, Aripa Savannah
10	12 th Feb	Aripa Savannah, tour of Port of Spain

LIST OF TRAVELLERS

Leader

Mike Russell: Sussex

Photos courtesy of Alan Wooll and Nigel Tinkler

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I hope that this report and attached species list will bring a warm glow in remembering the wonderful sights and sounds of Trinidad and Tobago we encountered throughout the holiday. For me, one of the great things about the trip was the company and how everyone got on so well. On the last day when we were recalling our most memorable moments, mine was seeing and hearing the "wows" as we kept encountering more wonderful wildlife, the 'wowometer' was working overtime!

Anyway, onto the trip report, in retrospect it's always good to get the worst bit of the holiday out the way at the very beginning and the 2-hour wait to get through immigration in Tobago after a good but tiring flight was not what needed at the time. However, Susan the Motmot agent was still there to greet us, get us on the coach and settled us into the Toucan Inn where we linked up with Nigel and Moira who were well ahead in the sun tan stakes having already been in Tobago for a week. A good meal and a beer and then the realisation that we were dining outside in the upper 20's centigrade eased away the frustration of the last 2 hours.

Feb 4th

Our first morning brought a sneak preview of what to expect in the next 12 days with **bananaquits**, **blue-grey tanagers** and **bare-eyed thrush** feeding happily around the breakfast tables. Then we met Newton George our guide in Tobago and his trusty driver Gary. Newton's knowledge and ability to hear, see and locate birds is phenomenal and has earned him a worldwide reputation in the bird world and it was easy to see why after spending a few days with him.

Now when you arrive on a beautiful Caribbean island, naturally the first place you want to visit is a sewage treatment plant, so this is where Newton took us. It was especially ironic for Moira as she had come away on holiday especially to get away from inspecting sewage plants! Still on getting out of the bus at Bon Accord, there was a great assortment of birds to look at and for most of us they were all new. Newton was trying to get us to look at a Tobagon endemic, a **scrub greenlet** which is a small bird that likes a bit like a chiffchaff, whereas the **great egret**, **green heron**, **tropical** and **grey kingbirds**, **'Hudsonian' whimbrel** and **least grebe** were all grabbing the attention.

A short drive next to the Tobago Plantation, formerly the grounds of the Hilton Hotel, and a stop by a lake where the **anhingas**, or snake birds were numerous and there was a very busy **belted kingfisher** flying around. A couple of **spectacled caiman** were also found and Newton showed us a tiny **black-throated mango** hummingbird nest.

On to some more lakes, actually they were ponds cunningly disguised as treatment ponds but did hold a good number of waders and we could diagnose the finer points between **greater** and **lesser yellowlegs** as well as between **solitary** and **spotted sandpiper**. Newton's reputation then got us into looking at a lovely private lake that was carpeted in white and red lilies. Here we were able to see where a rare **masked dusk** had been a second before it dived and re-appeared elsewhere on the lake. Eventually we all saw it though, along with the more easily viewed **black-bellied whistling ducks** and **purple gallinule** while a **mangrove cuckoo** flying around caused some excitement.

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Common Potoo (left) and Green Heron (right)

Our next stop was the Grafton Nature Reserve, by which time it was starting to get pretty hot. An hour spent here acquainted us with a number of species of which the **rufous-tailed jacamar** was perhaps the most dramatic, while the **red-rumped woodpecker** and **olivaceous woodcreeper**, only found on Tobago showed well. It was here that difference between those who like rare birds (i.e. Newton!) and those who like easy to see colourful birds was evident as the highlight was a **pigeon**, albeit a **scaly-necked** one, a relatively new bird to the island.

Midday tiredness was beginning to take hold and Newton took us to the Adventure Park at Arnos Vale where we could sit down, have a lovely cool fruit juice and just watch the most fabulous display of hummingbirds. The undoubted star was the **ruby topaz** a brilliant hummingbird, but we saw 4 other species as well plus such close views of a **red-crowned woodpecker** and the striking **barred antshrike**.

After this very welcome interlude, we made our way up to our Cuffie River but not before stopping briefly at a spot on the Caribbean coast where we saw some seabirds including **brown pelicans** and the rare **Cayenne tern**.

The track to the Cuffie River Nature Retreat seemed endless, but it was worth it as at the end of the road was this wonderful lodge, almost a Shangri-La which we had all to ourselves. Our arrival and the subsequent stay there was enough for Stephen to nominate it as his most memorable moment. A splendid lunch and an afternoon just settling around the Lodge was just what everyone needed, a chance to relax, sleep, swim and I'm reliably informed that Stephen got re-acquainted with his stomach after many years!

In the evening, and for all the evenings in fact, we were royally entertained by the **white-tailed nightjars** and a **common potoo** right outside our rooms. Just before dusk on one occasion, a couple of us witnessed a small falcon like bird attacking the bats, the attributes of a bat falcon, but the book said that only one had ever been recorded in Tobago. However, on consulting with resident expert Desmond and my raptor tome when I got home I think we can clearly put it down as a juvenile **bat falcon**.

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Feb 5th

An earlyish start found us bumping up the track and our way to the Roxburgh Road where we met Newton. You had to be quick out the bus to catch the overflying **great black** and **broad-winged hawks** but we did get more leisurely views of a striking **olive-green woodpecker**. It was here that Stephen encountered his bird of the holiday, where we were able to get wonderful views of both male and female **collared trogon**, these are really great birds and really typify a tropical birdwatching experience.

Onto the trail of the Tobago Forest Reserve where Newton gave us a short introduction to it'd history and ecology and it was really interesting to note that it had been protected for over 200 years, principally as it is the provider of fresh water on the island and it was good to hear that it will remain protected long into the future. It was quite difficult for us all to see birds here as the forest was thick and the path narrow, but we had no trouble with the **leaf cutter ant** trails all along the path.

Eventually most people saw the **grey-throated leaftosser** which was unhelpfully quite high up in a tree not tossing leaves, but wagging it's tail distinctively. A **plain antvireo** was as is it name implies while after some hard work some excellent views of a **blue-backed manakin** were seen by some. The male is a beautiful bird with a bright red cap which absolutely glistens when caught by the light. Fortunately, those who didn't see this one were able to get a good view of another later on in the morning. A trio of thrushes were recorded along the trail along with a difficult to see **stripe-breasted spinetail** which was ascribed to the 'lbj' category.

Back on the road Newton was able to find us an immortal tree that attracted the beautiful **red-legged honeycreeper**, amongst others, while Margaret earned some brownie points by finding a **Venezuelan flycatcher**, and then the allure of a wonderful lunch and a swim in the Cuffie River pool was calling us back. Gwynne pointed out a pair of nesting **tropical mockingbirds** in a flower holder by the side of the pool, brooding 3 fine eggs. A regular feeder to the tables here was the stunning **blue-crowned motmot**, a bird that captured Margaret's heart and nomination as trip favourite.

Feb 6th

No early start this morning, though the dawn alarm of the noisy **rufous-vented chachalacas** ensured that everyone, except Margaret, didn't sleep right through, so a free morning around the Lodge beckoned, although you all ended up by joining me on a walk down and up the road, where I wasn't able to find you anything new other than a **black-faced grassquit** and excellent views of the grey kingbird.

Gary again hauled his poor bus down to collect us after lunch for the longish trip to the Blue Water Inn at Speyside to meet Newton and board the boat for the short crossing to Little Tobago where seeing a **hawksbill turtle** with it's head out of the water was a real bonus.. Now I have to take my hat off to the group here as getting on and off the boat is no mean feat here but you tackled it with grit and determination and then able to enjoy a fabulous walk around part of the island. It was also very nice to see and hear Newton enthuse about the importance of Little Tobago and the role he has played in it's protection.

It was very hot and there were a few steep points but the view we got from the viewpoint overlooking the cliffs was magical and the sight of hundreds of **red-billed tropicbirds** gliding effortlessly past us deservedly won the vote of Jane for the most memorable moment of the holiday. Pam also had her favourite moment when her eagle eye spotted a tropicbird quietly

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sitting on her nest not much more than a foot away from where we were all standing. Along with tropicbirds, there was also the **magnificent frigatebirds** whose mastery of the air was enough to make it Nigel's bird of the trip, as well as the **red-footed** and **brown boobies**. Before returning to the boat, Newton extracted a rather indignant looking **Audubon's shearwater** from it's nesting hole, one of the early birds returning to breed there.

Back on board, the glass-bottomed boat cruised slowly over Angel Reef where the guide proudly pointed out the largest brain coral in the world and then promptly set anchor allowing some of us to snorkel or swim. There was a good variety of fish species around the reef and it was great to have Nigel able to identify many of them afterwards, which was great for him as it helped numb the pain on finding out later that England had just beaten Wales in the rugby back home! It became obvious at times in the holiday that Alan had a great affinity with the water and swimming and it was no surprise when he nominated the snorkelling as his most memorable moment. Just to round off a magnificent afternoon, Newton found us an **osprey** sitting serenely on a branch back on the island. We said goodbye to Newton back at Blue Water and the journey back seemed even longer and more contorted on the way back; Gary needed arms like a weightlifter to drive on these Tobagon roads!

Fortified by another wonderful Cuffie River meal the potoo and nightjars again provided the evening entertainment while we also able to find a splendid hawkmoth, but not, alas, identify it.

Feb 7th

Sunday and a day off for Gary as we spent the day around the Lodge. The **orange-winged parrots** joined the dawn chorus with the chacalacas and were pretty visible flying over all day. After breakfast, Desmond who works at the Lodge but is also an excellent ornithologist took us for a near 4-hour walk a very enjoyable but tiring feat in the heat of the morning sun. Desmond was a great character and a mine of information about the Retreat and its wildlife. We found two new birds on this walk, an easily viewable **yellow-bellied elaenia** and much less obliging **green-rumped parrotlet**, a bird that we would get better views of in Trinidad. One bird that Desmond found for us was a roosting **common potoo**, a remarkable camouflaged bird so hard to make out in the tree, a sight that earned a vote from Alan as the best of the trip.

As well as the birds, Desmond talked about many of the trees and plants and the fruit they produced and we came across the derelict workings of the old sugar mill at one point, as well as having great views of a large **ameiva lizard** and **shiny-backed salamander**.

The afternoon was free for relaxing and just enjoying being in such an idyllic place and it was going to be hard to leave the next day. Regina and her staff were lovely hosts and really ran a wonderful establishment that you could recommend to anyone.

Feb 8th

Leaving Tobago, the short flight to Trinidad went very smoothly where we we met at the Airport by Yogi and his son Mahish who were to be out guides for the week. I had Yogi on my last trip and liked him a lot, though he was quite difficult to talk and it had to be said some of his driving was interesting! Anyway we arrived safely at the Asa Wright Centre and for me it was great to be back there again. After settling in to our rooms and the first of an excellent Asa Wright lunch, we headed for the world famous verandah.

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For two of us Margaret and Tony, this first experience of the balcony provided the most memorable moment of the whole trip, the constant array of beautiful, colourful birds coming to the feeders was breathtaking. A stream of tanagers, hummingbirds, honeycreepers, thrushes and the ridiculously bright **violaceous euphonia** paraded before us, and for Margaret (and me as well) there was the additional bonus of a constant supply of coffee! Picking up the scraps underneath the feeders were the very appealing **agouti's** and the dramatic **golden tegu lizards**, appealing to most of us but not Margaret!



Over our days at the Centre we all became familiar with some of the common birds of which the **green honeycreeper** (*photo above*), Ann's favourite bird, and **purple honeycreeper** were particularly striking. **White-lined tanagers** were particularly numerous while an occasional visit by the male **silver-beaked tanager**, a bird that looks like it's dressed in velvet, was a real treat. Everyone got acquainted with the comical **crested oropendolas** and the brilliant noise that they made while throughout our stay we kept an eye on the **lineated woodpecker** nest. The constant comings and goings of the hummingbirds was entertaining but their speed was a challenge in identification but most of got to grips with the **white-necked jacobin** by the end and I think nearly everyone saw the extraordinary tiny male **tufted coquette** by the end.

On the first night some accompanied Caleb, one of the centre guides on a night walk which produced a few interesting sightings, including a **tarantula** deep in his hole, a roosting dove and a small **machete snake**.

Feb 9th

Saw us spending the whole day around the Centre and getting familiar with the place. The keener members of the party, or the insomniacs, met for early morning coffee and a chance to see the early birds just after 6.00am. You had to get up early to see the **channel-billed toucan** sit on his regular perch before setting off into the forest.

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After breakfast the extremely likeable and knowledgeable Barry took us for our familiarisation tour around the trails and said that there was three birds that he wanted us to see all of which duly obliged by the end of the walk. Before that though he spent some time at the herb garden pointing out the uses of some of the plants both to people and the wildlife. He found us another roosting **common potoo** and then our first view of the **Amazonian violaceous trogon** a really striking bird, before moving on to the first of the 'must see' birds.

Asa Wright is nothing if not organised and the signpost pointing to the **golden-headed manakin** lek was a bit of a giveaway, but it did what it said on the sign and we were treated to excellent views of these beautiful birds, not quite lekking but still great to see. Back on the trail we soon came across a male **white-bearded manakin**, very striking in it's own right, so that was two down, one to go. We could hear the next bird almost throughout the whole walk but to try and see needed a significant amount of back straining and flexibility of neck, but eventually and with the help of the scope we all were able to really well the source of all the noise, the **bearded bellbird**. A flexible back was also needed on the way back to see the raptors that were now beginning to enjoy the warm thermals above the forest as **grey-headed kite**, **double-tooth kite** and the **common black hawk** circled above our heads. Back at the verandah familiarising ourselves with the birds at the feeder was resumed and the **great kiskadee** began to put in regular appearances.

Afternoon tea and cakes followed by the 6.00pm rum punch added to the feeling that this was the real civilized way to watch birds. I'm embarrassed to admit that I didn't write down and now can't remember the name of the guy who did the talk on hummingbirds in the evening, but I do remember how outstanding his photography was and I learnt so much about these fabulous birds.

Feb 10th.

Time today to leave the comfort of the Centre and head out into Trinidad, though we didn't really go far, only onto the Blanchisseuse Road outside the Centre. It was a bit slow to start with but eventually more birds came into view, including good views of a **white hawk** and then the superb **ornate hawk-eagle**. A difficult **streaked xenops** didn't really excite, but more sightings of collared trogon and rufous-tailed jacamars were greatly appreciated while a very obliging green and black butterfly, **heliconia fritera**, allowed itself to be inspected at close range. A couple of North American warblers, **American redstart** and **black and white warbler** showed well.

Lunchtime and our first introduction the extremely enjoyable Asa Wright picnics, punctuated by many passing **blue morpho** butterflies, the huge wings glowing iridescent blue in the sun. After lunch Yogi and Mashish spent along time conversing with a ferruginous pygmy owl trying to coax it unsuccessfully into the open, but there was a huge number of small birds getting excited about it. We stopped to inspect a a 5-foot dead **fer-de-lance** snake pinned to a bamboo cane and our brush with dead animals continued when we stopped to look at a dead **turkey vulture**, Mahish thinking that it might have been killed by the ornate hawk-eagle. The pattern of stopping on the road continued and at one point we watched 3 **short-tailed hawks** circling over us, the next saw us viewing some obliging **blue-headed parrots**. Eventually we stopped at the village of Morne la Croix where we were fortified by fresh juice and excellent cookies and watching the garish **yellow-rumped caciques** going about their business at their pendulous nests, at one point being upstaged by the even more brightly coloured **yellow oriole**. This colourful feast was added to by the arrival of a **green-olive woodpecker** in a nearby tree.

Tiredness, heat and a beckoning rum punch called us back and just one more stop where we saw a flock of **scaled pigeons**, and that was our birding done for the day.

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Feb 11th

Following the early morning stint on the verandah and the usual hearty breakfast we set out to the Aripa Agricultural Research Station via a quick stop down the road to see the endemic **Trinidad euphonia**, and on alighting from the bus we were in to a whole set of new birds. Two striking black and white birds, **piebald water tyrant** and **white-headed marsh-tyrant** popped up along with **yellow-chinned spintail**, but it was here that the **red-breasted blackbird** really caught the eye. A pair of mating savannah **hawks** were not inhibited by our presence while a little pool right by the side of the road allowed us really close views of **least sandpiper** and **greater yellowlegs**.

After a very rewarding hour or so there we headed off to the Nariva Swamp on the east coast which was quite an arduous journey in terms of traffic rather than time, but eventually we arrived on the coast at Manzanilla in time for lunch, though the lure of a swim in the sea was too much to wait until after we had eaten. It was here that Alan's affinity with water really blossomed and you could see the years roll off him as he frolicked in the surf! It was hard to imagine that back in the UK everyone was still shivering in the snow as here we were bathing in the warm Atlantic Sea watching **brown pelicans** diving and **magnificent frigatebirds** gliding by overhead.

Driving down the coast road we finally arrived at the Nariva Swamp, but not before stopping to look at a very statuesque **cocoi heron** by a bridge. I think many felt that the term 'swamp' defied what were looking at, but it had been an incredibly dry wet season and was very different to when I visited 3 years ago. The settlements were also interesting to see and looked slightly at odds with the conservation protection that the area had. Because of the dry, there were fewer birds, but we did get excellent views of the lovely **yellow-hooded blackbirds** and **yellow orioles**. As we left the swamp a **grey hawk** flew serenely past the buses.

The journey back was no less arduous but we arrived back at the Aripa Savannah in time for the evening entertainment which both Yogi and Mahish said had been somewhat unreliable of late. Nevertheless fortified by rum punch and an excellent Asa chocolate cookie we settled down to wait. A few minor performers put in an appearance, including the ridiculously thin **fork-tailed palm-swift**, and as all hope of the main performers turning up began to disappear, there was a noise behind us and a flock of about 20 **red-bellied macaws** flew over us; and that was it. While this fleeting spectacle was enjoyed by all, I did detect some puzzlement as to why we had to wait about 40 minutes for 15 seconds of birdwatching! A serious point was that the birds, already scarce, had just had their traditional roosting site demolished for housing development and a new site had not yet been located.

A tiring day undoubtedly but we were able to see a lot more of the island, see some great birds and luxuriate in the warm seas of the Atlantic!

Feb 12th

A really early start today; away by 6.30am and off to a different part of the Aripa Savannah. The first stop aesthetically didn't look promising as we stopped by the side of the road at a place strewn with rubbish and smelling of a few dead things, but it was the prelude to an excellent morning's birdwatching. The night before I said that I really hoped we would see a **pearl kite**, a tiny raptor, and sure enough as soon as we got off the bus there was not just one but two. They performed beautifully showing us all angles and behaviour traits. Both Tony and I, being gentleman of impeccable taste, chose this as bird of the holiday.

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A few yards down the way a whole raft of new birds and excellent views of others followed in quick succession as Yogi and Mahish found us **masked yellowthroat, white-winged becard, southern bearded tyrannulet** and **green-rumped parrotlet**. As we were enjoying this spectacle, Mahish then found us a bird that we had been hearing ever since we arrived in Trinidad but had yet to see, but here it was right out in the open, a lovely **ferruginous pygmy owl** being mobbed by a number of birds including a particularly persistent **white-necked jacobin** and a beautiful **blue dacnis**.

At another stopped, our intrepid guides managed to lure out a **black-crested antshrike** and **rufous-browed peppershrike** for us to admire, but then top-trumped everything by finding an outstandingly camouflaged **common pauraque** sitting on a nest by the side of the road (*photo below*). It was so well camouflaged that, although only about 10 feet away they had to use the laser beam to locate it for us. So impressive was this bird that it won Pam's heart and vote as best bird of the trip. In addition to this, a couple of **monarch** butterflies flew past adding to the list of wonderful things we had seen.



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Spain. vanessa our guide for the trip was really excellent and gave us some really good background information about all aspects of Trinidad and Tobago, historical, sociological and religious make-up. It was nice to see some of the architecture in the capital and the new Arts and Culture Centre was very impressive.

Vanessa took us around the Botanical Gardens and again proved no slouch when it came to biology as well. Trinidad was heading for the Carnival and our walk through the lively square where some of the children had been rehearsing and then down to the positively rocking main street was.. well an experience! At least it was a chance to spend money and the quick visits to the carnival teams costume shops, or lack of costume shops, at least gave us a glimpse of what was going to happen in a few days time. The trip was well worth doing I think though everyone was pleased to get back to the serenity of Asa Wright!

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Feb 13th

Our last full day and some special sights awaited us. It was a while since we had visited some sewage treatment ponds so our first stop at the Trincity Ponds rectified this. Our first bird on arrival was new for the trip, a **yellow-billed tern**, while flying low over the water were the really attractive **white-winged swallows**. It was good place to sort out heron and egret identification as well, especially as there was **snowy egrets**, **great egrets** and the white morph of the **little blue heron** to sort out.

The journey to the Waterloo Mudflats was again a bit tedious with some mild concern at a roadside fire blazing at one point. Eventually we got to the coast and on getting out there were was a group of about at least 500 **laughing gulls** loafing at the edge of the water and a diligent search amongst them found 3 dark birds with very odd bright red beaks, the lower mandible longer than the upper. These were **black skimmers** and later we saw one skimming along the edge of the water, a sight so intriguing that Moira nominated it her bird of the holiday. At the edge of the flock there were a few **royal terns** as well. The boats anchored in the water were full of resting pelicans and gulls one of which was a **lesser black-backed gull**, while the **mudskippers**, known locally as 4-eyed fish were entertaining.

At the next stop we stopped near a temple which we couldn't visit as a funeral ghat was in process, but another viewpoint enabled us to compare a number of waders, quite difficult to identify as they were in winter plumage, but did manage to sought out **semipalmated plover**, **semipalmated sandpiper**, **short-billed dowicher** and **willet** and a new species of tern, **large-billed tern**.

After another impressive lunch taken in the less impressive shade of a fish gutting shed, we made the trip back up to Caroni Swamp including a stop at the very strange but pretty spectacular Kayra Siddhi Hanuman Temple with its huge statue that looked rather like a bollywood version of Goofy from the Disney Films! That may be, but it was enough to make it Gwynne's most memorable moment of the trip.

From the bus just before getting to Caroni a huge flock of cattle egrets flew up in field and the other bus to the one I was in saw the reason for this, a **long-winged harrier**, but at least in our bus we were lucky to see a **mongoose** run across the road.. At the entrance to the swamp we met up with Newton again who was leading a private tour and joined the young but very impressive Sean Madoo who took us on a wonderful boat trip through the mangroves. Drastic diversionary tactics were needed to stop Margaret seeing the **Cook's tree boa** curled around the tree and then Sean was able to locate not one but three **silky anteaters** asleep in the tree, apparently a record even for him! A **boat-billed heron** high up in a tree was very difficult to see, but everyone in the boat had a great view of a **peregrine falcon** and **osprey** having a bit of an aerial tussle.

Eventually, we came to the lagoon, moored up and out came the rum punch and cookies and we were all set for one of the worlds' great ornithological spectacles. The spectacle began with small groups of **snowy egrets** flapped over to the island, with one group must have numbered a hundred or so. Soon the first of the **scarlet ibises** joined them and then more and more and soon you were looking at a tree that no long was devoid of birds but now looked like a Christmas tree decorated in dazzling scarlet and white. It is a real privilege to witness this spectacle and in perfect unison both Nigel and Moira nominated it their most memorable moment of the trip while the magnificent scarlet ibis was Jane's favourite.

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Feb 14th

Our last day of the holiday and again were we privileged to witness another great spectacle. After breakfast, Denise took us on the shortish but fairly steep walk down to the St Dunston's Cave where the **oilbirds** roost. They are truly strange birds, with pretensions of being a bat, and we were able to see them both at roost and a few were flying about and I think some people were surprised at how big they are. They impressed Ann so much that she made it her bird of the trip. On the way back we got excellent views of a **collared trogon** and the rest of the morning was spent relaxing on the verandah. At the round-up of the holiday Gwynne announced that it was difficult to nominate an individual bird of the trip and he just nominated all the colourful ones!

After a final lunch at Asa, we made our way down to the Airport, Ann still throwing scraps from the dinner out the bus for the feral dogs, and saying goodbye to our excellent guides Yogi and Mahish, we left Trinidad at nearly 30 C, after an overnight flight to arrive at Gatwick to a slightly less humid -3 C, oh well!

From the round-up after dinner at Asa Wright it sounded like everyone enjoyed the experience of Trinidad and Tobago, the accommodation and food was excellent, as were the guides and we had some truly magnificent sights and sounds while we were there. The Company was wonderful and I hope this report revives some of those memories to see you through the rest of the cold weather.

Mike Russell
Wildlife Travel



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ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th
Family Anatidae (Swans, geese and ducks)														
Masked Duck	<i>Nomonyx dominicus</i>		X											
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>		X											
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>		X											
Family Cracidae (Chachalacas, Guans and Currasows)														
Rufous-vented Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis ruficauda</i>		X	X	X	X	X							
Family Podicipedidae (Grebes)														
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybatus dominicus</i>		X										X	
Family Phythontidae (Tropicbirds)														
Red-billed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon aethereus</i>				X									
Family Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)														
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		
Family Sulidae (Gannets and Boobies)														
Masked Booby	<i>Sula dactylatra</i>				X									
Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>				X									
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>				X									
Family Phalacrocoridae (Cormorants)														
Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>		X									X		
Family Anhingidae (Darters)														
Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>		X									X		
Family Pelecanidae (Pelicans)														
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>			X						X		X		
Family Ardeidae (Hérons)														
Cocoi Heron	<i>Ardea cocoi</i>									X				
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>			X	X							X		
Tricoloured Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>		X									X		
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>											X		
Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>		X							X	X	X		
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>											X		
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>		X											
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>									X		X		
Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>											X		
Family Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)														
Scarlet Ibis	<i>Eudocimus ruber</i>											X		
Family Cathartidae (New World Vultures)														
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>							X	X	X	X	X	X	
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Pandionidae (Osprey)														
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>				X					X		X		
Family Accipitridae (Hawks)														
Grey-headed Kite	<i>Leptodon cayanensis</i>						X	X						
Double-toothed Kite	<i>Harpagus bidentatus</i>							X					X	
Long-winged Harrier	<i>Circus buffoni</i>											X		
Pearl Kite	<i>Gampsonyx swainsonii</i>										X			
White Hawk	<i>Leucopternis albigollis</i>								X					
Common Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>							X	X	X		X		
Great Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>			X	X	X								
Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>									X	X			
Grey-lined Hawk	<i>Asturina nitida</i>									X	X	X		
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>								X			X	X	
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>			X	X	X								
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>												X	
Ornate Hawk-eagle	<i>Spizaetus ornatus</i>								X					

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Family Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)														
Yellow-headed Caracara	<i>Milvago chimachima</i>		X									X		
Bat Falcon	<i>Falco rufigularis</i>			X										
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				X	X					X	X		
Family Rallidae (Rails)														
Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyryla martinica</i>		X							X				
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>		X											
Family Charadriidae (Plovers)														
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>											X		
Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>		X	X						X		X		
Family Jacanidae (Jacanas)														
Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>		X							X				
Family Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)														
(Hudsonian) Whimbrel	<i>Numenius (phaeopus) hudsonicus</i>		X									X		
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>		X									X		
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>		X											
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		X									X		
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>		X									X		
Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>											X		
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>													
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>											X		
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>									X				
Willet	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>											X		
Family Laridae (Gulls)														
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>		X									X		
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>											X		
Family Sternidae (Terns)														
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>		X									X		
Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>		X											
Cayenne Tern	<i>Thalasseus eurygnathus</i>		X											
Large-billed Tern	<i>Phaetusa simplex</i>											X		
Yellow-billed Tern	<i>Sternula superciliaris</i>											X		
Family Rhynchopidae (Skimmers)														
Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger cinerascens</i>											X		
Family Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)														
Scaled Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas speciosa</i>								X			X		
Scaly-naped Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>		X											
Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>		X			X								
Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>		X	X	X	X	X					X		
Ruddy Ground Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>		X	X					X	X	X	X		
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Grey-fronted Dove	<i>Leptotila rufaxilla</i>							X		X	X	X	X	
Family Psittacidae (Parrots)														
Red-bellied Macaw	<i>Ara manilata</i>									X				
Green-rumped Parrotlet	<i>Forpus passerinus</i>					X				X	X			
Blue-headed Parrot	<i>Pionus menstruus</i>							X						
Orange-winged Amazon	<i>Amazona amazonica</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Cuculidae (Cuckoos)														
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>							X	X				X	
Mangrove Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus minor</i>		X											
Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>		X		X		X			X	X	X	X	
Family Nyctibiidae (Potoos)														
Common Potoo	<i>Nyctibius griseus griseus</i>		X		X	X	X					X		

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Family Strigidae (Owls)														
Ferruginous Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>								H	H	X	H	H	
Family Steatornithidae (Oilbird)														
Oilbird	<i>Steatornis caripensis</i>												X	
Family Caprimulgidae (Nightjars)														
Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>										X			
White-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus cayennensis</i>		X	X	X	X	X							
Family Apodidae (Swifts)														
Short-tailed Swift	<i>Chaetura brachyuran</i>			X	X	X				X	X			
Grey-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>							X	X		X	X	X	
Band-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura spinicaudus</i>							X	X					
Fork-tailed Palm Swift	<i>Tachornis squamata</i>									X	X	X		
Family Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)														
Rufous-breasted Hermit	<i>Glaucis hirsutus insularum</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Little Hermit	<i>Phaethornis longuemareus</i>						X	X		X				
Green-throated Mango	<i>Anthracothorax viridigula</i>											X		
Black-throated Mango	<i>Anthracothorax nigricollis</i>		X		X	X		X	X					
White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ruby Topaz	<i>Chrysolampis mosquitus</i>		X	X		X	X				X			
Tufted Coquette	<i>Lophornis ornatus</i>					X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Blue-chinned Sapphire	<i>Chlorestes notata</i>											X	X	
White-chested Emerald	<i>Amazilia chionopectus</i>						X	X						
Copper-rumped Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tobaci</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
White-tailed Sabrewing	<i>Camplopterus ensipennis</i>			X										
Family Trogonidae (Trogons and Quetzals)														
Amazonian White-tailed Trogon	<i>Trogon viridis</i>							X				X		
Amazonian Violaceous Trogon	<i>Trogon violaceus</i>							X				X		
Collared Trogon	<i>Trogon collaris</i>		X	X					X				X	
Family Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)														
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>		X											
Family Momotidae (Motmots)														
Blue-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus momota bahamensis</i>		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Galbulidae (Jacamars)														
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	<i>Galbula ruficauda</i>		X	X	X	X			X					
Family Ramphastidae (Toucans)														
Channel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos vitellinus</i>							X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Picidae (Woodpeckers)														
Red-rumped Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis kirkii</i>		X											
Golden-olive Woodpecker	<i>Piculus rubiginosus</i>			X					X					
Red-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes rubricapillus rubricapillus</i>		X			X								
Lineated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>					H	H	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Furnariidae (Ovenbirds)														
Stripe-breasted Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis cinnamomea</i>			X										
Grey-throated Leaf-tosser	<i>Sclerurus albigularis zamorae</i>			X					X					
Streaked Xenops	<i>Xenops rutilans</i>								X					
Yellow-chinned Spinetail	<i>Certhiaxis cinnamomeus</i>									X		X		
Family Dendrocolaptidae (Woodcreepers)														
Olivaceous Woodcreeper	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus griseus</i>		X											
Cocoa Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus susurrans</i>			X		X		H	X					
Family Thamnophilidae (Antshrikes and Antbirds)														
Great Antshrike	<i>Taraba major</i>						X	X	X	X				
Black-crested Antshrike	<i>Sakesphorus canadensis</i>										X			
Barred Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
Plain Antvireo	<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>			X										

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White-fringed Antwren	<i>Formicivora grisea tobagensis</i>		X											
White-flanked Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula axillaris axillaris</i>								X					
White-bellied Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza longipes</i>							H						
Family Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)														
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes olegineus</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Southern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>										X			
Forest Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis gaimardii</i>								X				X	
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>					X					X		X	
Tropical Pewee	<i>Contopus cinerus bogotenis</i>						X		X					
Yellow-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Tolmomyias flaviventris</i>		X											
Fuscou Flycatcher	<i>Cnemotriccus fuscatus</i>		X											
Olive-sided Flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>							X	X				X	
Pied Water Tyrant	<i>Fluvicola pica</i>									X		X		
White-headed Marsh Tyrant	<i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i>									X	X	X		
Venezuelan Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus venezuelensis</i>		X		X									
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>		X	X	X	X	X							
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Grey Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>		X	X	X	X								
Streaked Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>							X						
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i>							X						
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Cotingidae (Cotingas)														
Bearded Bellbird	<i>Procnias averano</i>							X	H	X	H	X	H	
Family Pipridae (Manakins)														
Golden-headed Manakin	<i>Pipra erythrocephala</i>						X	X						
Blue-backed Manakin	<i>Lepidothrix coronata caquetae</i>		X	X		X								
White-bearded Manakin	<i>Manacus manacus trinitatis</i>							X					X	
Family Tityridae (Becards and Tityras)														
White-winged Becard	<i>Pachyramphus polychopterus</i>										X			
Black-tailed Tityra	<i>Tityra cayana</i>							X	X					
Family Vireonidae (Vireos)														
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>								H		X	X		
Scrub Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus flavipes</i>		X			H								
Golden-fronted Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus aurantiifrons</i>							X						
Family Hirundinidae (Swallows)														
White-winged Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albiventer</i>		X							X	X	X		
Grey-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>								X	X	X	X		
Caribbean Martin	<i>Progne dominicensis</i>		X			X								
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>						X	X		X	X	X	X	
Family Troglodytidae (Wrens)														
Southern House Wren	<i>Troglodytes musculus tobagensis</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rufous-breasted Wren	<i>Thryothorus rutilus</i>			X										
Family Polyoptilidae (Gnatwrens and Gnatcatchers)														
Long-billed Gnatwren	<i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i>								X		X			
Family Turdidae (Thrushes)														
Yellow-legged Thrush	<i>Turdus flavipes</i>			X					X					
White-necked Thrush	<i>Turdus albicollis</i>			X					X			X		
Bare-eyed Thrush	<i>Turdus nudigenis</i>		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cocoa Thrush	<i>Turdus fumigatus</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)														
Tropical Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gilvus tobagensis</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

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		Family Thraupidae (Tanagers)												
White-lined Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus rufus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Silver-beaked Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue-grey Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Turquoise Tanager	<i>Tangara mexicana</i>							X	X	X		X	X	
Speckled Tanager	<i>Tangara guttata</i>									X				
Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>							X	X	X		X	X	
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue Dacnis	<i>Dacnis cayana</i>							X			X		X	
Green Honeycreeper	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Red-legged Honeycreeper	<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>		X											
Purple Honeycreeper	<i>Cyanerpes caeruleus</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bicoloured Conebill	<i>Conirostrum bicolor</i>											X		
Black-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris bicolor</i>			X	X		X							
Grassland Yellow Finch	<i>Sicalis luteola luteola</i>									X				
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater	<i>Sporophila minuta</i>									X				
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>									X	X			
Trinidad Euphonia	<i>Euphonia trinitatis</i>									X				
Violaceous Euphonia	<i>Euphonia violacea</i>						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Family Parulidae (New World Warblers)														
Tropical Parula	<i>Parula pitiayumi</i>						X							
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>								X					
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>			X					X					
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>			X			X	X			X	X		
Masked Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis aequinoctialis</i>										X			
Golden-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>							X						
Family Icteridae (New World Blackbirds)														
Crested Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius decumanus</i>					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Yellow-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus cela</i>								X	X	X			
Yellow Oriole	<i>Icterus chrysater</i>						X	X	X	X	X			
Yellow-hooded Blackbird	<i>Chrysomus icterocephalus</i>									X	X	X		
Carib Grackle	<i>Quiscalus lugubris</i>		X	X										
Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Giant Cowbird	<i>Scaphidura oryzivora</i>			X	X	X	X			X				
Red-breasted Blackbird	<i>Sturnella militaris</i>									X				

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Other Wildlife

Mammals

Agouti – Seen daily at Asa Wright Centre, Trinidad

Trinidad Red Squirrel – Seen at Tobago Plantation, and on 2 sites in Trinidad

Mongoose – One ran in front of the first bus on the way to Waterloo Temple

Silky Anteater - 3 individuals seen on the Caroni Swamp trip

White-lined Sac-winged Bat – The bat seen flying during the day time at Asa Wright and Blanchisseuse Road

Reptiles

Spectacled Caiman – Seen at the ponds in the Tobago Plantation and at Trincity Sewage Ponds

Hawksbill Turtle – An individual seen from the boat on the way to Little Tobago

Shiny-backed Salamander – One seen at the base of a tree on the walk around the Cuffie Retreat

Cook's Tree Boa – Seen by everyone except Margaret on the Caroni Swamp trip!

Fer-de-Lance – A dead specimen along the side of the Blanchisseuse Road

Machete Snake – Seen on the night walk on the first night at Asa Wright Centre

Unknown sp – A very long tin snake seen from one bus on the Blanchisseuse Road

Golden Tegu Lizard – Seen feeding under the feeders at Asa Wright Centre

Green Iguana – One seen in Tobago

Common Ameiva – Seen at various places on Tobago and Trinidad

Common House Gecko – At Cuffie Lodge and Asa Wright Centre

Insects

Blue Morpho Butterfly – Most people got a good sighting in Trinidad, but particularly on the Blanchisseuse Road

Sulphur (sp) – The commonest yellow butterfly seen regularly

Postman – Black and red butterfly seen on both islands

Flambeau – various places on Trinidad and Tobago

Arntia Armather – The colourful butterfly similar to painted lady at Cuffie River

White Peacock -

Monarch – Aripa Savannah

Gold Rim – from the verandah at Asa Wright

Queen Swallowtail – from the verandah at Asa Wright

Heliconia fritera – Seen well at stop on the Blanchisseuse Road

Silk worm Moth

Hawkmoth sp

Leafcutter Ants

Bullet Ants

Tarantula Wasp

Fiddler Crabs

Tree climbing Crabs

Blue Devil

Yellow-tailed Damsel

Seargent Major Damsel

Queen Angel Fish

French Angel Fish

Parrotfish

Moonwrasse

Banana Wrasse

Atlantic Blue tango

Squirrelfish

Traveli

Black Dungan

Mudskipper