

Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula – Maya, Monkeys & Turtles

Naturetrek Tour Report

4 - 14 November 2017



Brown Basilisk



Brown Pelican



American Flamingos



Central American Spider Monkey

Report and images by Ed Drewitt



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Day 1

Saturday 4th November

Flight to Cancun and transfer to Akumal

Leaving behind an overcast and slightly damp Gatwick, we left the runway at just after 1pm. We spent the 10-hour flight and a little under 5,000 miles heading across the Atlantic, over Miami and down into a hot, sunny Cancun in Mexico. We arrived just before 5.30pm local time, catching the last of the day's light. We met our local guide Fernando in arrivals and headed to a street taco restaurant for dinner in Puerto Morelos. It was very authentic and we were able to see the chef cooking our fillings for our tacos as we watched a House Gecko and bats flying amongst the flowering Almond Trees on the other side of the road.

Travelling south along the coast, we arrived at our beachside hotel, Las Villas Akumal, around 10pm, in warm, evening heat and the background sound of crickets. Having checked in and re-arranged rooms, we headed off for the night, ready to begin exploring the magnificent Yucatan Peninsula the following day.

Day 2

Sunday 5th November

Tulum 29°C

With a five hour time difference between the UK and Mexico most were up early ready for breakfast at 7am and the chance to take in the beautiful beach scenery that surrounded us. A Melodious Blackbird and a Couch's Kingbird were up early calling at first light. Black, swift-like bats flew low between the palms, flying under the eaves of the apartments and gleaning insects off the palm fronds.

At breakfast Long-tailed Grackles were foraging around the resort and Great Kiskadees, with their bright yellow breasts and thick black eye stripes, were chasing each other around the palms. A roving flock of Yucatan Jays was hanging out on some building; they look like male blackbirds with yellow legs and wings dipped in blue-green paint. Sue had photographed a Belted Kingfisher in the distance on a palm and spotted Ruddy Turnstones, a Grey Plover, a Spotted Sandpiper and a Great Blue Heron.

After breakfast we headed to Tulum, a Mayan walled City which served as the major port for Coba, a town that we would be visiting later in the week. Tulum was one of the last cities inhabited and built by the Mayas. Old world disease is thought to have caused the demise of this city, with over 1,000 citizens residing here until the arrival of the Spanish. Tulum is now one of the best-protected Mayan ruins on the Peninsula and due to this it is a very popular tourist attraction. From our hotel the ruins are only a short drive away and we were able to get there for 9am before large numbers of tourists arrived. Up to half a dozen Collared Doves were around the car park. Walking up to the ruins from the car park we passed the Black Mangroves and stopped to admire a male Common Basilisk, known locally as the Jesus Christ Lizard, due to its fast bursts of running over water. His tail was hanging from a tree like a dangling branch and he was incredibly cryptic. Occasional termite nests hung cemented to the mangroves. Fernando spotted a Grey Catbird, flicking its tail and sporting its black cap. Dragonflies were darting around and our first Spiny-tailed Iguana was sunning itself on grass. Another was nearby with half its body tucked into a fallen timber crevice.

Fernando explained how the Paper Tree peels its bark to discourage fungi, termites and strangler fig trees from living on it. Orchids were growing on the ground and a line of ants was travelling down a tree and along the ground. A small family of Yucatan Jays, an adult and two juveniles, were taking advantage and picking them off. The young birds were moulting their white head feather into black ones.

As we entered into the open area where the main ruins lie, a Magnificent Frigatebird drifted over, followed shortly by a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. Amongst the palm trees and cover a few Great Kiskadees, a Tropical Kingbird, a Palm Warbler (feeding on the ground), two Bronze Cowbirds and a Yucatan Woodpecker made for good viewing. All around us Spiny-tailed Iguanas were sunning themselves or foraging.

Back by the entrance wall a few young White-nosed Coatis were foraging, climbing trees and putting their noses into everything. Butterflies were everywhere including Zebra Longwing, sulphurs, Postman, Sister, Malachite, Common Morpho and Julia. While we stood under some shade we had excellent views of a pair of Hooded Orioles and a Tropical Mockingbird. A coati was chasing an iguana which was chasing the ground-feeding birds! Further along amongst the ruins iguanas stood over limestone boulders and others looked out of the tops of walls. Two male iguanas were sizing each other up, flaring their throat flaps and raising their bodies and spiny backs so they looked big. This was accompanied with head nodding. In the end one male retreated while females looked on.

We headed for some shelter and found many small birds foraging. On the ground up to eight Palm Warblers were feeding below several trees. We had superb views of two Yucatan Vireos, with one feeding on berries only metres away. A Black-and-white Warbler was also feeding in the tree and a male iguana was keeping quiet, clearly moulting his skin. Further along we found more Yucatan Vireos and had super close views of Yellow-throated Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler and White-eyed Vireo. We came into the open with stunning views of the blue sea; the shallow water and sandy seafloor was part of the reef just off shore. A Zone-tailed Hawk flew overhead; its wings long and held in a v-shape like a harrier. Every so often we encountered another coati; a young animal was sniffing for food amongst tourists and an adult female came out of the mangroves before disappearing again. It was very hot by now so we walked back to the welcome centre to stop for a beer or soft drink and then walked back to the minibus. We stopped briefly to watch a very obliging Social Flycatcher perched above us; like a miniature Great Kiskadee with a darker, broader mask.

We drove a short way down into Tulum where we ate lunch at the authentic Don Cafeto Restaurant, enjoying local music and dishes such as mole, stuffed sweet red peppers and grilled fish.

By 2.30pm we were heading back along the highway to Las Villas Akumal, stopping briefly to watch a second year Osprey feeding on a fish on top of a telegraph pole. We had mainly a bottom shot, which became a theme, although occasionally it looked down towards us. Turkey Vultures were also drifting overhead along the journey.

We met again at 4.30pm and took a 15-minute walk along the beach to Akumal where our main target was to snorkel with Green Turtles. Those who wanted to snorkel got geared up and headed out into the warm sea. Immediately there were fishes beneath us and as we swam over small coral reefs of Brain Coral and Fan Coral, there was a whole variety of fishes including tangs, damselfish, wrasse, Sergeant Major and a Trumpetfish. Nick found a Green Turtle just as Sue found a ray. We opted for the turtle and spent some time watching it feeding on Turtle Grass and occasionally swimming back to the surface for air. It was very obliging. As we headed on

two Barracuda ominously drifted past while a juvenile French Angelfish fed amongst the sand. Just as we headed back in a school of Permit Fish swam past. We walked back along the beach passing a fishing Snowy Egret and a Spotted Sandpiper. A Belted Kingfisher flew out over the sea and up to three Royal Terns, two Brown Pelicans and one Neotropic Cormorant flew past.

We met for dinner at 7pm, enjoying salsa, guacamole, chicken fajitas and a delicious coconut dessert that was a little like rice pudding but with coconut. A House Gecko joined us on the wall occasionally. With the checklist complete we headed to bed ready for an early start.

Day 3

Monday 6th November

Tulum and Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve 29°C

We met at 6.30am and headed back to Tulum to breakfast in the Don Cafeto Restaurant. We enjoyed some really tasty dishes involving eggs, plantain, ham or fruit salad, accompanied by salsa and pickled vegetables, toast and coffee. We then drove 25 minutes further south to Muyil, meaning 'a group of rocks', where we went to the visitor centre of the very special Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve for a trip out into the lagoons to explore the mangroves. Here across the vast site, larger than Mexico City, there are nine different ecosystems with 24 archaeological sites nestled amongst them. Around the welcome centre we had good views of Tropical Mockingbird, a female Summer Tanager and a Turkey Vulture sat on a radio mast above the roof. Ruddy Ground-doves were on nearby wires.

We then drove to the dock - stopping for a small mud turtle that was crossing the road - to meet our boats and crew for our two-hour boat tour. While our guide Omar was explaining more about the park, Vaux's Swifts fed overhead.

We headed out onto the lagoons where, amongst the sedge-like plants, we spotted a few American Coots, an Anhinga and for a lucky few, a Morelet's Crocodile (before it slinked under water). Hawker dragonflies were zooming around low over the water. Amongst the mangrove edges there were Tropical Kingbirds and Great Kiskadees, alongside a white-phase Great Blue Heron and a white-phase Reddish Egret. A small group of six Blue-winged Teal dashed through and out of sight.

We headed on through the Mayan-dug channels peering down into the water to see tiny cichlids, tetras and larger fishes, many of which were marine fishes coming here to spawn. Mangroves are important nurseries for them. Close by a stunning Bare-throated Tiger Heron was foraging. Cross between a heron and a bittern, this short-tailed heron boasted an immaculate soft grey neck covered in fine stripes or vermiculations. The skin around the base of its beak was a bright yellow-green. From a distance the bird's markings helped it blend into the background. A Yellow Warbler and a Yellow-throated Warbler were foraging amongst the mangroves, and a Grey-crowned Yellowthroat was singing from a single, bare shrubby tree. As the cloud began to clear and the temperature rose, Black and Turkey Vultures began soaring overhead. Another Bare-throated Tiger Heron perched like a celebrity for us as we floated by snapping model photos of it.

We stopped at a jetty where we were then able to relax in the water and spend thirty minutes gently floating down a mangrove channel. The channel led out into the sea and had a very gentle current which floated us down

between mangrove trees and epiphytes growing amongst them. Those with facemasks could see various fishes beneath the clear water. It was an incredible experience just floating along past the mangroves.

We stopped at the next jetty where Omar showed us ancient conch shells that had been killed a very long time and remained here in this channel, perhaps when it had been more saline. We walked back to the boats along a boardwalk, taking in the extensive bog habitat and the specialist grasses and flowering plants growing here. A Great Egret was in its foraging pose distracted by its next meal.

We headed back to shore, passing a Neotropic Cormorant and arriving back to a Royal Tern sat on a post by moored boats. We walked back along the track, distracted by mosquitoes and chickens, and managed to see a Tropical Mockingbird and a Social Flycatcher before Fernando arrived with the minibus. We then had a short ride back to the welcome centre where we changed and did a little birding before lunch. Just across the road four or five stunning Green Jays were foraging, showing off their parakeet-like tails, green above and yellow below. Their heads were bright blue and eyes yellow. All these colours helped keep them cryptic amongst the leaves. Nearby the trees were busy with a pair of America Redstarts, the male flashing his red and black tail. A Hooded Warbler, bright yellow with a contrasting black mask, was catching insects amongst a pile of cut palm fronds. Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler and a Yucatan Squirrel were also feeding in the trees.

After a grilled fish lunch we visited the Mariposario or butterfly pavilion to see a variety of butterflies including Blue Morpho, Postman and Giant Swallowtail up close. A wild Blue Morpho also glided past outside and we watched social wasps building a phallic-shaped nest tube, with half a dozen individuals lined up around its entrance regurgitating a mud or paper-like deposit.

We headed a very short distance down the road to the Muyil ruins where we admired the ruins and enjoyed watching a few Wood Thrushes, which looked like a Song Thrush with a brighter, more orange-brown back. An Ovenbird, with its stripy crown and pipit-like walk was foraging on the ground with one of the Wood Thrushes. A bright red Summer Tanager, a small group of Yucatan Jays and a Magnolia Warbler were in nearby trees.

In search of more birds, we continued along the boardwalk listening to the short creaking songs of frogs and glimpses of a woodpecker and Wood Thrushes. A Plain Chachalaca called nearby. From the watchtower, Sue and Nick spotted an Osprey. During some heavy rain we dashed back to the minibus that drew up and head back to the hotel via Tulum for some supplies.

Back into sunshine, Sue and Nick chose to return to the Green Turtle site for some snorkelling with Fernando. They had encounters with four turtles one with a Remora Fish and another with four Permit Fish. They spent time over the rocky coral areas seeing a large shoal of Blue Tangs, two Southern Stingrays, Needlefish, Spotlight Parrotfish, Yellow-headed Wrasse, two Caribbean Reef Squid and a Spotted Spiny Lobster! A the walk there and back revealed four Least Sandpipers, a Brown Pelican, three Royal Terns, four Neotropic Cormorants, a Little Blue Heron, a Snowy Egret, a few Ruddy Turnstones and a Tropical Mockingbird.

Day 4

Tuesday 7th November

Coba 29°C

We met for breakfast at 7am, enjoying a quick buffet of cooked eggs, and left promptly at 7.30am to head an hour west in land to the ruins at Coba. Along the way there were many kingbirds, Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Vaux's Swifts, a Keel-billed Toucan and Brown Jays. Hanging, tubular oriole nests were dangling from the power lines and half a dozen Black Vultures were sunning themselves on a pylon.

We reached Coba at 8.45am and Sue immediately found two Limpkins perched on the top of a tree on the other side of the car park.

Coba was a large Mayan city located around two lagoons with a series of roads and trails branching off. At its peak, around 50,000 citizens inhabited this city and gradually built across the area. The ruins consist of ballgame courts and various pyramid structures, with the largest being the impressive Lxmoja Pyramid standing 42 metres high; the largest in the Yucatan Peninsula. Our guide Damian explained more about the immediate ruins, explaining more about their history and pointed out ancient Maya paint on the religious building. We were entertained by the story of pok ta pok, the ballgame where the ball is hit up through a stone hoop without using hands. While he presented to us a small group of Olive-throated Parakeets fed noisily in a tree above us. A Masked Tityra, black and white with a red face fed in another tree with a White-eyed Vireo.

As we walked the two kilometres to the pyramid we passed a few Magnolia Warblers and a White-eyed Vireo. We stopped at one location where there was lots of bird activity. There was woodcreeper and male Hooded Warbler, soon followed by a stunning Turquoise-browed Motmot. In the darkness of the scrub layer, sunlight shining through lit up the iridescent pale blue tail like a glimmering gem. A few colourful Grey-headed Tanagers fed amongst the leaf litter while a Black-and-white Warbler fed nearby. Fernando spotted a Black-headed Trogon, confirming what Sue had seen a little earlier. A Wood Thrush showed briefly and three Red-throated Ant Tanagers, a red male and two females with yellow chins, showed well.

We reached the Lxmoja Pyramid and most of the group took on the challenge of climbing to the top of this impressive structure. The view from the top was well worth the climb, with uninterrupted views of the surrounding forests and the two lagoons of Coba. Vultures were seen circling on the thermals as far as the eye could see. After catching our breath from the climb and taking in the sights we headed back down the pyramid to join up with the rest of the group. Fernando and Kathy had watched an obliging Canivet's Emerald Hummingbird in our absence.

Going back to the minibus we opted to take the tricycle pedicabs back to the entrance and then headed back to a nearby restaurant to have our lunch on the side of Lake Coba. Before lunch we looked out across the lake spotting Anhinga, Double-crested Cormorant and an American Crocodile with its spiky tail, floating like a log. The shallow waters were full of tadpoles and an anole lizard was lifting its front leg to look like a twig. A pair of Yucatan Woodpeckers showed very well in a bare tree full of fruits on which they were feeding and a White-winged Dove preened nearby.

We sat down for a delicious buffet lunch watching out across the lake; two Limpkins flew low and landed in the shallows. After lunch three Pied-billed Grebes were busy diving, easily visible on the still water while a pair of

Social Flycatchers and Tropical Kingbirds fed nearby. One flycatcher kept attacking a car window in response to its reflection. The Limpkins were nearby feeding and we could make out the white spotting on their backs.

The afternoon was a chance for us to visit and enjoy the cenotes which cover the Yucatan Peninsula. These cenotes are large underground sinkholes, formed by the collapse of the limestone bedrock above. They were used in the past by the Mayan civilization as one of the main sources of water. Our first visit was the Choo-ha cenote, an intimate, stunning cave pool. As we went down the steps two bats hung from a rocky ceiling, cloaked in their wings. Most of us jumped into the cold, crystal clear water before admiring the stunning stalactites hanging from above and a few flying bats. Beneath the water small black catfish swam feeling their way with their long barbules. We had the experience to ourselves and swam round the cenote to see all its incredible nature architecture. As we headed back up we saw a huge tree root growing down the wall heading for water.

We dried off quickly outdoors and spotted a few Brown Jays outside before driving down the road to the Multan-ha cenote. This was a much deeper pool with fine tree roots hanging from the ceiling. Busier than the other cenote, we headed back up to hear about and see Kathy's photos of a pair of Grey Foxes; her reward for staying above ground!

We started back to the hotel and came alongside Lake Coba again. It was beautiful in the sunshine. A Monarch Butterfly fed on some white flowers. Four Tropical Kingbirds were perching on the reeds and zip wire, while Long-tailed Grackles foraged on the edge of the lake. A tame Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret and Little Blue Heron fed in their own piece of brackish water by the side of the road. Tempted by the zip wire we excitedly headed to the tower and zipped our way down across the lake enjoying views of a fishing Osprey overhead and a resting Anhinga. For Ed it was his first time and despite a little vertigo, he thoroughly enjoyed the exhilaration of it all. As we walked back half way grackles were still feeding amongst the reedy vegetation while a Cinnamon Hummingbird and a female Summer Tanager fed nearby.

We boarded the bus and headed back to the hotel passing a Groove-billed Ani, a small flock of cowbirds, kingbirds, mockingbirds, Yucatan Woodpeckers, Black Vultures and Turkey Vultures. We stopped for a perched Grey Hawk with beautiful vermiculated breast and chest feathers and a Red-billed Pigeon perched on the top electricity cable.

Day 5

Wednesday 8th November

Punta Laguna & Otoch Ma'ox Yetel Kooh 29 °C

We packed the minibus by 6am and headed off for an hour's drive to Punta Laguna to see Spider Monkeys and possibly the much more elusive Howler Monkeys.

Punta Laguna is a 5,000 hectare Ramsar reserve protected by the government but run by the local communities. It's known locally as Ma'ax Yetel Kooh, which in Mayan means 'House of the spider monkey and the jaguar'. The primary forest grows over ancient limestone boulders. We had breakfast by reception and met with our local guide Alberta, who would lead us around the trails of Punta Laguna in search of Spider Monkeys. While we ate, a Clay-coloured Thrush sang loudly nearby and a Social Flycatcher and our first Boat-billed Flycatcher were in the top of a large tree. White-fronted Parrots noisily flew overhead.

As we began our walk a Blue-crowned Motmot was perched very close to the path. Tiny froglets were all across the path; we had to be careful where we stepped. A Black-headed Saltator was sporting a peachy bottom which was all some of us could see and a Greyish Saltator perched only briefly. Throughout our walk the sweet songs of the Spot-breasted Wren could be heard along with the occasional Eastern Wood Pewee.

It wasn't long before we had our first Spider Monkeys, a small family group feeding on berries in the trees above. A male monkey stretched himself across the branches of two trees allowing a baby to pass across. We spent some time with the family, observing their prehensile tails, pinkish faces surrounding their eyes and dark, glossy hair. Six hundred live here in the forest and Alberta's father knows them all by name simply by seeing their features. We left them foraging and continued walking looking for Black Howler Monkeys. Along the woodland trail we saw Grey-headed Tanagers, two separate Black-headed Trogons, Olive Sparrow, Green Jay, Squirrel Cuckoo, another motmot and an Ivory-billed Woodcreeper. The odd Red-throated Ant Tanager was following through the trail looking out for any trail; indeed we passed an impressive wide trail of soldiering army ants. We also walked by a whole area of leaf-cutting ant mounds and stripped branches. And holes in the path were home to rodents, spiders and snakes. We stopped by a pool where a Green Heron remained still just beneath us and nearby watched a Yucatan Squirrel which we could hear cracking a nut. Continuing on we paused for a while by a cenote entrance to look for two Mottled Owls. They were incredible well hidden in the dark, sat on a ledge beyond hanging roots. One flew out and with some time and persistence most people saw the other.

We crossed the main path to look for another family of howler monkeys, pausing to see a Yellow-backed Oriole, a Golden-fronted Woodpecker and a Yucatan Woodpecker. Alberta ran ahead and came back with good news. We walked up to a viewpoint across the lake and headed into some thicker woodland. There in front of us at eye level was a pair of Black Howler Monkeys feeding. After five minutes the male began revving up his voice and began his deep, growling song which travelled across the forest. In response, a male from the family we tried to see earlier began calling. Our male continued for some time, increasing his volume and coarse growling before winding down and taking a breath (sounded more like a gasp!). Wow!

We headed back down and paused by the lake. Sue paddled her feet in the water attracting tiny tetras and larger cichlids. A Belted Kingfisher rattled past nearby and local men recovering their canoes after recent rainfall disturbed a Green Heron. Various damselflies and large colourful butterflies were flying around in the hot sunshine. We stopped to buy some hand-embroidered Spider Monkey t-shirts and other items from a souvenir shop along the main track run by a local mum and her two children. Thanking Alberta and topping up on snacks and drinks from the adjacent mini-store we headed on for an hour to the city of Valladolid where we stopped for lunch. We paused briefly to see four Groove-billed Anis feeding by the side of the road.

We stopped for lunch in Valladolid at a restaurant by a large, open cenote, enjoying a big mix of Yucatan food which we all had a share of. We then headed on to our next hotel, the beautiful Villas Arqueologicas Hotel. After we had unloaded the bus and got settled into our rooms for a few hours, we took a walk around the hotel grounds at 4pm (one hour behind the coastal state). A Turquoise-browed Motmot was dusting itself in the car park and White-fronted Parrots were noisily calling from the trees. Yucatan Woodpeckers were in abundance and we saw five or six, some very close. Other birds included Masked Tityra, Great-tailed Grackle, Melodious Blackbird, a mating pair of White-winged Doves, two Black Vultures chilling in a tree and a flock of 20 White-winged Doves overhead. A brief rain shower moved in so we headed back to the hotel for a drink by the pool where large bats began to forage overhead and a small group of Groove-billed Anis flew between the palms.

Nick spotted a Yucatan Spiny-tailed Lizard on the thatched roof near us too. We met again at 7pm for dinner and social time and bid farewell for the night at 9pm.

Day 6

Thursday 9th November

Chichen Itza 29°C

Dawn was cool and refreshing with bats flying around and Yucatan Woodpeckers in the hotel's palm trees. We enjoyed a buffet breakfast at 7am and met our guide, Juan Tun at 8am. Kathy had rescued a hawkmoth that we admired before being placed into a bush. We just had a short walk down the road into a quieter entrance of Chichen Itza reserved for hotel guests, arriving before it got too busy. Half a dozen White-fronted Parrots showed well in a large tree outside our hotel, sporting their red 'masks'.

Chichen Itza is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and after stopping by an open cenote Xtoloc we entered into the 47-acre archeological site where Juan told stories of the many different restored original architecture including the nunnery, the observatory and the High Priest's Grave, and the 90,000 people who once lived here. We then came out into the grand open area to see the main feature, The Castle, and experience the sound of clapping echoing off the structure to replicate the call of the quetzal. This temple, representing the Mayan calendar, is 25-metres high and is built over a similar one that lies beneath. Juan explained how obsidian was used to view the rotation of the sun; we had a cut with lenses of obsidian. Despite being a dense, black substance, when the sun came out we could see the sun (highly filtered).

We were focusing mainly on the archeology although some birds couldn't escape our attention including Ruddy Ground Doves, a Boat-billed Flycatcher, a Social Flycatcher, White-winged Doves, grackles, and a Melodious Blackbird. Three Turkey Vultures stood with their wings wide open on the observatory before taking off and soaring overhead. After visiting the Great Ball Court, where straight, vertical walls lead to the stone ring for a ball to be hit through (instead of sloping walls as at Coba), a Bat Falcon was calling from a tree. We had excellent views of this small falcon that looks cross between a Peregrine and a Hobby.

We had a Mexican-themed buffet lunch in a nearby hotel, entertained by grackles and a Peacock. And then rested for the afternoon. Some enjoyed an incredible massage, one of the best they had ever had, while others joined us on a walk at 3.30pm back to Chichen Itza to spot some birds. Just in the trees around the hotel entrance we spotted Yucatan Woodpecker, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Social Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, Yellow-throated Warbler, White-winged Dove and a new species, a male Yellow-winged Tanager, preening in a tree. His black tail and wings with yellow patches at the base of the primary feathers were obvious while the blue hues of his head were difficult to see. Under a palm frond an almost perfect vase-shaped papery wasp nest was hanging with tiny paper wasps sat here and there across its outer surface. A Turquoise-browed Motmot was dust bathing in the car park like yesterday. Heading past the next hotel, five Groove-billed Anis were hanging out together by some food looking very chilled.

We headed back into Chichen Itza just before the last entrance at 4pm and as soon as we arrived four Ocellated Turkeys were scratching around in the grass. These shy birds were quite approachable, showing off their iridescence, peacock-like patterns, white and black stripy secondary feathers and warty, wattled necks and heads.

It was a peaceful, warm, late afternoon feeling. The vendors were packing away and the insects were beginning to sing. A few Red-billed Pigeons flew overhead. Birds were beginning to gather and two Boat-billed Flycatchers and four Social Flycatchers flew low over the trees. Three more Boat-billed Flycatchers were perched just above us showing off their bright yellow breasts and wide, thick beaks. Ten Melodious Blackbirds were feeding together with some grackles.

Out by The Castle pyramid and all around Great-tailed Grackles were busily foraging, some on the steps of The Castle. Up to 100 were all around, many heading off in flocks pre-roost.

The first bat appeared in front of The Castle at 4.45pm and many more began to appear. As we headed out we watched them coming out of their roost from the eaves and decorative holes of a hotel. Looking above the setting sun over 20 bats were flying around; large Starling-size bats with Swift-like wings and short, pointed tails. A martin or swallow was flying amongst them. As we checked in on a Spiny-tailed Iguana peeping out of a tree hollow, a nearby mystery bird revealed itself as a Black-headed Saltator.

We had an hour to relax and met again at 6.30pm to explore the nearby trees with torches. Fernando found a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl perched in a tree by the hotel clutching a headless young Spiny-tailed Iguana. It stood there on the branch while we all got a good view. Various bats flew around and Sue spotted fireflies. We headed for dinner at 7pm enjoying Mexican dishes, drinks and cake to celebrate Sue's birthday.

Day 7

Friday 10th November

Chichen Itza and transfer to Rio Lagartos 31°C

We met at 6am and wandered slowly down to the entrance of Chichen Itza. Large bats were flying around the entrance swooping like Swifts over our heads. Quiet at first, as the sun became higher more birds appeared. Overhead over 70 cowbirds heading towards the archeological site while grackles came out of roost. A descent of Yucatan Woodpeckers, at least seven, flew over and began feeding in the palms. Yucatan Squirrels were busy while no-one was around; at least five were seen by the group and Steve watched 25 chasing each other in the palms. Warblers foraged in a big tree including Yellow-throated and Magnolia. Orioles were feeding on the ripened fruits of the palms and we had good views of Altamira Orioles where the male has a yellow-orange band near the bend of his wing instead of white. A Masked Tityra and a female Summer Tanager were also nearby. The bats began to go back to roost and we watched half a dozen fly and scramble through decorative holes between hotel apartments. A few Northern Rough-winged Swallows dashed through and White-fronted Parrots began to appear. A pair gave stunning views in the morning sunshine, sporting their white foreheads, peachy beaks and red patches between their beaks and pale eyes. In flight crimson patches on their wings became visible. As we headed back for breakfast five Groove-billed Anis were stunning themselves in a tree alongside a Greyish Saltator and a Hooded Oriole. Other birds included Boat-billed Flycatchers, Great Kiskadee and Melodious Blackbirds.

We enjoyed various cooked breakfasts and fruit drinks at breakfast and then had time to pack, relax and visit the chocolate shop for souvenirs before setting off to Tizimim at 10.30am. With tummies still full we decided to continue on to our final destination, Rio Lagartos, and negotiated the criss-crossing roads in Tizimim (plus a road closure) and asked various locals the way out! Though not before glancing a Bat Falcon dashing through the town square like a Hobby. Along the journey we saw over 100 Black Vultures, with many large groups circling in

thermals. There were Turkey Vultures too plus Tropical Kingbirds, a flock of five Groove-billed Anis and an immature Grey Hawk. As we left the woodland behind and travelled into open country we saw more cattle in fields. One was full of Cattle Egrets, one for every cow! A highlight was a stunning Crested Caracara stood tall in the road before flying off.

We arrived at our final hotel, Villa Pescadores, by the shore of Rio Lagartos at 1pm and headed straight to the restaurant next door for lunch. We enjoyed fresh shrimp and fish dishes before choosing some desserts brought in by a road seller; the restaurant allows the seller to come into restaurant to see his delicious goods. Just outside Laughing Gulls entertained us and Brown Pelicans perched on the harbour posts.

After unpacking we met at 4pm and walked along the promenade, admiring the small fishing boats characterised by very long bamboo poles used for catching octopus. The tide had turned and was just beginning to reveal food for over 20 Ruddy Turnstones feeding beneath us or lining up on the boats. In the welcome, cooling breeze Magnificent Frigatebirds soared overhead with Turkey Vultures, Laughing Gulls and the odd Brown Pelican. Out across the water we saw at least three Wood Storks with their dark folded neck skin, three Great Blue Herons, two White Pelicans and six gorgeous American Flamingoes looking pinker than pink in the evening sunshine. Throughout the walk we saw over 100 White Ibises, with many large flocks heading to roost around 5.15pm. The juveniles were dark grey on top, contrasting with the white adults. Great White Egrets and Snowy Egrets were also seen out across the water.

We stopped at a beachside bar at the end of the promenade, which had nectar feeders hanging. Our first Mexican Sheartails, endemic to Mexico, and Cinnamon Hummingbirds, greeted us. Three or four sheartails would gather on a feeder and the Cinnamon Hummingbirds would chase them off. Outside, a male sheartail sat on a small palm, with his white neck and iridescent throat feathers that shone bright purple when turned to the sun. The Cinnamon Hummingbirds had their favourite perches on the other side of the bar, calling as they rested. We were able to get fantastic views and photographic opportunities. Outside the Ibises continued to head for their roost along with the odd cormorant and egret.

We headed back to the hotel at 5.30pm as the light was fading quickly. We met again at 7pm and walked just down the road to our restaurant.

Day 8

Saturday 11th November

Rio Lagartos and Rio Coloradas 27°C

We gathered at 5.30am and armed with bananas, coffees and pastries we headed out on our boat into the Rio Lagartos and its mangroves. Mexico is one of six countries with the most mangroves in the world. Light was just appearing in the sky and frigatebirds appeared in the half-light. Ismael was our guide and he was soon pointing out a flock of 25 Black Skimmers as they headed out of roost swirling over the water. Laughing Gulls and cormorants also appeared along with two White Pelicans. In the distance to the west of the town we could see flamingoes and headed over to see them. Over 80 American Flamingoes were busy chatting to each other, some having disputes and other resting. A Reddish Egret was foraging amongst them. While watching the flamingoes four Sanderlings flew around the boat, and a Caspian Tern and a Lesser Yellowlegs flew by. Four Wood Storks were flying overhead and more gulls and pelicans were appearing around the port. Other birds in this area included two Willets, Snowy Egret, three Cabot's Terns and Osprey. As we headed into the channel surrounded

by mangroves there were Great Blue Herons every 20 metres or so, inter dispersed with the odd Great Egret, Neotropic Cormorant, White Ibis, Little Blue Heron, Willet or the occasional Anhinga. Ospreys were regularly flying overhead, with two at one point, a juvenile and a second year bird in moult. Occasional Northern Water Thrushes called from the mangroves and one was spotted in flight briefly. A juvenile American Coot was quietly resting near a Willet and a Spotted Sandpiper, while a Solitary Sandpiper was feeding with two other Willets further along. Continuing along two Tricoloured Herons, a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture and a Royal Tern flew overhead. The vulture soared nearby for a while. A Mangrove Vireo was heard and identified by Ismael. Flocks of tens of Blue-winged Teal regularly flew over, some containing 100 birds.

We had a real treat next as we approached a bridge across the mangroves. A fisherman was bringing in his small net from the water around the jetty and had caught quite a few mullet. Nearby was a two-metre long American Crocodile, waiting patiently for its next titbit. We watched as the gent threw a fish and the crocodile snapped it up with a splash and swallowed it down. The crocodile came right alongside the boat and we were able to admire its scaly body and eyes. To our surprise a smaller, more yellow Morelet's Crocodile slinked to the surface nearby before being chased away with a big splash by the other croc. What a great experience. Most of us held a Horseshoe Crab, which the fisherman had caught, before it was put back into the water.

As we continued on we paused to see a juvenile and an adult Yellow-Crowned Night Heron hiding in the trees. We continued on to the salt pans passing many more Great Blue Herons including a white morph individual. We could just see some flamingoes on the salt pans and were entertained by half a dozen Brown Pelicans and a cormorant that came right by the side of the boat expecting food. As we headed back we slow down to watch a Common Black Hawk perched in the mangroves. Ismael threw a fish he had collected from the fisherman earlier and we watched the hawk come down and snatch the fish. We then sat watching it metres away on its favourite perch. On our way back we saw many more Ospreys, a stunning Roseate Spoonbill, 20 Cattle Egrets, two Crested Caracaras and a Yellow Warbler. We tried a creek for Boat-billed Heron after searching for them earlier. While no heron appeared we did see a puffer fish, a Needle Fish, a juvenile and adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron, a Mangrove Warbler (a subspecies of Yellow Warbler with a rusty-coloured head) and a female American Redstart. As we headed back out to town two Belted Kingfishers flew out of the mangroves and over the water.

We arrived back at just after 9am and went to breakfast enjoying fried and scrambled eggs, toast and some fruit with yoghurt and muesli. We then headed back to the end of the promenade to see the hummingbirds again. Meanwhile, our hotel had refilled their own hummingbird feeders and we enjoyed watching sheartails coming to feed.

Just before entering the mangrove boardwalk, the Peten Mae trail, we stopped in the minibus at the entrance to photograph an obliging Common Black Hawk. As we entered we admired the tangle of Red Mangrove trees. In the shaded light Ali spotted an American Pygmy Kingfisher, a male with bright orange chest and white belly. A little later a female, with a dark green chest band also appeared. Sue, who was further ahead, saw a Green Jay and pointed out a Grey Cracker Butterfly. We came to a stunning and relaxing open pool where a Morelet's Crocodile was stunning itself in the water. Small fish were plentiful and many all spooked together if they saw our shadow in the water. Five or six different species of dragonfly and damselflies were resting and flying around ranging from lime green to blue in colour. A juvenile Green Heron came down to fish close by while two Cracker Butterflies fought above us, making their distinctive crackling sound with their wings. Close up the

butterflies have a multitude of circles and streaks, and delicate small patches of red on their forewings. Magnolia Warbler and Black-and-White Warbler were in the nearby trees as was another, or the same pair of kingfishers.

Back at the bar we watched a few Cinnamon Hummingbirds feeding and explored the boardwalk for Laughing Gulls and Cabot Terns. As we left a female sheartail made an appearance.

We stopped for a rest at the hotel and headed to lunch at a very pink restaurant, with flowers and flamingoes all over the place. They also had some interesting washed up skulls from Leatherback and Green Turtles and dolphins.

After lunch at 3pm we headed to extensive salt pans and salt-water lagoons at Rio Coloradas. Just outside the town over 30 Mangrove Swallows were perched on the overhead wires. A few Palm Warblers were feeding amongst the ground vegetation. On the first main pool we stopped at over 30 Black-necked Stilts were feeding along with half a dozen Greater Yellowlegs, a Lesser Yellowlegs and Western Sandpiper. Tropical Mockingbird was common along the track, passing between vegetation on either side and the odd Tropical Kingbird was on the fencing. As we drove along parallel to the salt lagoons tens of flamingoes turned into an overall total of hundreds busily feeding and resting across the area. In the distance skeins of hundreds of ducks, probably Blue-winged Teal, were flying above the horizon. Reddish Egrets were present in small numbers and we watched one running and swerving in all directions with its wings splayed in an effort to catch its next meal. At one stopping point over 200 cormorants were lined up, accompanied by small numbers of Turnstones, Sanderlings, a Kelp Gull, Brown Pelicans and a few White Pelicans. Small numbers of Willets and Greater Yellowlegs were scattered all along the journey too. At one location a salty shingle spit was home to two Snowy Plovers, two Semi-palmated Plovers, eight Western Sandpipers, two Grey Plovers and a Short-billed Dowitcher. We found more dowitchers including a very close group of eight, alongside 14 American Avocets and a Marbled Godwit. We had passed another group of a dozen avocets just a little earlier too. Amongst the flamingoes and near to a Great Blue Heron we admired a Roseate Spoonbill; an unbelievable pink colour with a naked, dark-skinned head and its huge spoonbill. As the light faded the flamingoes continued to feed into the darkness. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron appeared and a Zenaida Dove sat on the track. As we headed back in the dark, occasional small Sandpipers took off from the track. Just as Ali was asking Fernando whether any mammals can survive in this area where fresh water is absent, some eyes reflected light back to us. We edged closer and realised they were Cozumel Raccoons, endemics to Mexico and endangered. A mum and her three well grown young were curious to our headlights and presence. A little nervous mum took them off into the vegetation, though not before we had seen them well. Somehow they do find freshwater, probably from their food, and survive here!

We went back to the hotel for half an hour to get ready for dinner and then headed out at 7pm to a restaurant by the water's side where occasional night herons flew past, calling in the dark. After devouring some tasty seafood dishes and drinks we headed back for 9pm ready for another early start.

Day 9

Sunday 12th November

Rio Lagartos and Rio Colorados 30°C

Today would be our last full day wildlife watching in the Yucatan Peninsula.

We left the hotel at 5.30am and headed back towards Rio Colorados stopping by a brackish pool and scrubby vegetation. A Northern Crested Caracara flew over the minibus and was perched in a tree by the pool when we got out. Four Snowy Egrets, seven Black-necked Stilts, a Tricoloured Heron, a Little Blue Heron, a Great Egret and a Spotted Sandpiper were feeding on the pool. Four flamingoes quietly flew in, dropping height quickly and landing like ballerina with as little much as a rippled. One was colour-ringed. In the distance we could just hear a Laughing Falcon. We walked along a track into the scrubland where flowering, aromatic herbs were attracting bees, huge black wasps and long-tailed skipper butterflies. Common Ground Doves were calling and occasionally seen flying past and quails could be heard. Our target bird was Northern Cardinal and we weren't disappointed. After some tricky attempts we all managed to see the stunning red male and the browner female. The bush they were popping up from was also busy with Common Yellowthroat, a jumping Blue-black Grassquit, a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher and two Yucatan Wrens. The Yucatan Wrens are Dipper-size with distinctive barring across their plumage and very striking. Walking further along we had better views of the male grassquit, the male cardinal and two Social Flycatchers. Tropical Mockingbirds were abundant and half a dozen were on the nearby electricity wires. A Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture circled right over our heads and on the sand beneath our feet we noticed the trail of a snake.

We headed down the road in the minibus bus passing two groups of anis and a Black-headed Grosbeak, although only Fernando got good views. We stopped at the crossroads outside of Rio Lagartos where a bright red male Vermillion Flycatcher was sat on a bush as if ready for us.

It was 7.30am so we headed back to the Peten Mae trail briefly where four or five Northern Water Thrushes were calling. A Bright-rumped Attila showed briefly. At the pool the young Morelet's crocodile swam our way under water before surfacing and hanging in the water. Cracker butterflies were flying around along with a male Mexican Shoemaker butterfly and many dragonflies. As we headed back Sue spotted a Common Black Hawk overhead and as we got back into the vehicle a few parrots noisily arrived into the mangroves. Driving back along the promenade we stopped to photograph an Osprey and passed resting Royal Terns.

We had breakfast at 8.30am entertained by Brown Pelicans and frigatebirds outside the breakfast room, including a male with his red gular pouch. We left at 9.20am and headed back to where we were this morning and to the Sendero Peten Tucha (trail). As we began two Mangrove Buckeye butterflies rested on the ground. Whilst walking down the paths, American Redstart, Mangrove Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Waterthrush and an Ovenbird were all seen. The waterthrush was obliging, calling and feeding by some water like a wagtail. At one point along the track there was a hive of activity with Black-and-white Warbler, a female American Redstart, a Northern Parula and Magnolia Warbler all above us. A large patterned frog leapt off the bridge into the water and a black and white species of kite spider had strung a web across some branches. Nick caught sight of a Blue-crowned Motmot and Sue saw a crocodile before it disappeared. We stopped at a pool where a young Spiny-tailed Iguana was hiding in a hole in the timber of a look out tower, only its tail was sticking out! A small group of anis moved through the vegetation at the back of the pool. Heading back Fernando noticed a cryptic Marbled Treefrog sitting vertically on a mangrove tree root that was growing downwards from above us. Just before we got back to the minibus a Yucatan Whiptail lizard scampered into the leaf litter where it was very well camouflaged.

With the time at almost 11.30am we stopped at the nearby brackish pool on the road seeing two new flamingoes (one had a different colour ring to the morning bird), Great Egret, Tricoloured Heron, a Semi-palmated Plover,

two Killdeer, a dozen mix of Western and Least Sandpipers, a dozen Black-necked Stilts, the caracara and one of each of the yellowlegs. In the salty mud we found the footprints of raccoons and Herons.

With lunch calling we drove over to San Filipe, a small town just west of Rio Lagartos where we had some lunch before heading back to the hotel to rest and pack for the afternoon. We left again at 4.30pm to head out onto the water to enjoy an evening boat trip along the coast.

As we sailed slowly along the edge of the mangroves we passed a dozen Great Egrets, seven Belted Kingfishers, a Willet, a Spotted Sandpiper, a Tropical Kingbird, a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture and heard a few Northern Waterthrushes. As the light began to fade egrets began to head for their roost and we saw dozens flying together and landing in trees. The guide would occasionally turn off the boat engine so we could drift quietly while experiencing the natural sounds of the mangroves. We saw over 40 Little Blue Herons, over 20 Snowy Egrets and over 40 Tricoloured Egrets and one Reddish Egret. A flock of ten Royal Terns flew past and in the dark we approached a Great Blue Heron and a Tricoloured Heron. Once dark we started to explore the mangroves with torchlight. Suddenly a Barn Owl-like bird flew above the water and into the trees. We found it again and it was a Boat-billed Heron, a nocturnal Heron with a huge beak that we had been looking for over the past few days. Another flew behind it and disappeared. Very happy we continued along and found a resting raccoon with its arms dangling down from the mangrove branch it was laid on. We approached quite close seeing its distinctive masked face and banded tail. As we headed back we caught the eye shine of another Boat-billed Heron, and while watching for the eye shine of another raccoon we saw another Boat-billed Heron stood in the water. Despite our best attempts to photograph it, the bird flew up and away into the trees calling. We headed back, enjoying the starlit sky and fireflies switching their luminescent light on and off. We arrived back at 6.30pm and freshened up at the hotel before heading off to our final meal together.

Day 10

Monday 13th November

Transfer to Cancun 24°C - 29°C

We headed back to the hotel for breakfast, and then packed our bags into the minibus and headed to Cancun airport to catch our afternoon flight back to London Gatwick. From the breakfast table we watched a female shearwater who came into the room. Out on the water seven White Pelicans were feeding while Turnstones were foraging amongst the boats. A single flamingo was also out on the water and a flock further along the estuary.

We headed off at 8.45am and unlike other days hawks were out in force along with two American Kestrels on wires. Along the way Grey, Short-tailed, Roadside and Sharp-shinned Hawks all flew over the road. We slowed down to see lots of Cattle Egrets amongst a field full of cows while Black Vultures and Turkey Vultures were all around. During our journey we experienced torrential rain and were glad this came down on our journey back to the airport! We stopped at 12.15pm in Puerto Morelos at La Playita, a beach restaurant, dashing out of the minibus quickly to cover. We enjoyed our last lunch together, and almost thought we'd lose Steve as he choked on his food. He soon recovered when Fernando got up to rescue him! We continued 20 minutes on to the airport where we got dropped off at Terminal 3 and said our goodbyes and thanked Fernando.

Those of us heading back to the UK arrived back at Gatwick Airport ahead of schedule and said our farewells before departing to our different parts of the country.

Huge thanks to Fernando for his excellent driving, guiding and use of road bumps!

Day 11

Tuesday 14th November

Arrival back in the UK after an fact-filled and enjoyable tour in Central America.

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Bare-throated Tiger-heron



Common Black Hawk



Immature Yucatan Jay



American Crocodile

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	November									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>				3						
2	Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>										
3	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>		1	5				2	✓	✓	
4	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>				1			2	✓	✓	
5	Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>			1	2				13		
6	American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>							2	10	4	7
7	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>		6	1				8	40+	20+	✓
8	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>		8					15	50+	50+	✓
9	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>			1					5	1	
10	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>								2	40	
11	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>		1	1	1				2	40	
12	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>		1	1	1			✓	1	15	
13	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>		1		1			✓	30+	4	
14	Great White Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>			2	1	1		3	6	15	
15	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>							✓	20		
16	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>			1	2	2			1		
17	Yellow-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>								5	H	
18	Black-crowned Night-heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>								4		
19	Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearia</i>									4	
20	Bare-throated Tiger-heron	<i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i>			2							
21	Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>							3+	5		
22	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>							100+	6	20	
23	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>										
24	Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>								2		
25	American Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>							8	300+	8	✓
26	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>			6					500+		
27	American Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	1		2	8	8	1	100+		100+	✓
28	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>		3	6	6	6	3	8+	20+	6	✓
29	Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	<i>Cathartes burrovianus</i>		2		1				1	3	

	Common name	Scientific name	November									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
30	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>										1
31	Common Black-hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>							1	2	1	
32	Gray Hawk	<i>Asturina plagiata</i>				1			1			1
33	Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>										1
34	Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>										1
35	Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>		1								
36	Northern Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>							1		1	1
37	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		2	1	1			1	6	3	
38	Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>									H	
39	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>										2
40	Bat Falcon	<i>Falco ruficularis</i>							1	1		
41	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>								1		
42	Plain Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis vetula</i>			1	1						1
43	Ocellated Turkey	<i>Agriocharis ocellata</i>						4				
44	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>			3					1		
45	Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>				2						
46	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>								30	12	
47	American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>								30		
48	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		1						4		
49	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>								2	1	
50	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>									2	
51	Snowy Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>								2		
52	Marbled Godwit	<i>Limosa fedoa</i>								1		
53	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>								6	1	
54	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>								1	1	
55	Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>								1		
56	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		1						3		
57	Willet	<i>Tringa semipalmatus</i>								10	1	
58	Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>		2	2				20+	10	12	12
59	Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>								15		
60	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>								12		
61	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>								8	8	
62	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>			2						4	

	Common name	Scientific name	November										
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
63	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>		1						100+	100+	100+	✓
64	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>									1		
65	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>									1		3
66	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maxima</i>		3	4					4+	6	15	
67	Cabot's Tern	<i>Thalasseus acuflavida</i>									6	1	
68	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>									25+		
69	Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>			6	4	1			6	2	4	4
70	White-crowned Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>								2			
71	Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		6	30	20	6					2	6
72	Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>											
73	Red-billed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas flavirostris</i>				1		2	3				
74	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>				2	20+	12	2				1
75	Zenaida Dove	<i>Zenaida aurita</i>									1	3	
76	Common Ground-dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>										4	
77	Ruddy Ground-dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>			4	4	2	4				1	
78	Olive-throated Parakeet	<i>Aratinga nana</i>			2	6						H	
79	White-fronted Parrot	<i>Amazona albifrons</i>						12	6	8			
80	Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>						1					1
81	Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>				1	8	5	10	1	10		
82	Mottled Owl	<i>Strix virgata</i>						2					
83	Ferruginous Pygmy-owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>			H				1				
84	Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>			40	30							20
85	Canivet's Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon canivetii</i>				1							
86	Cinnamon Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia rutila</i>				1			2	2	1		
87	Mexican Sheartail	<i>Doricha eliza</i>								6	3	1	1
88	Black-headed Trogon	<i>Trogon melanocephalus</i>				1	2						
89	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>		1				1			2	7	
90	American Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle aenea</i>									2		
91	Blue-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus momota</i>						1				1	
92	Turquoise-browed Motmot	<i>Eumomota superciliosa</i>				1	1	1					
93	Keel-billed Toucan	<i>Ramphastos sulfuratus</i>			1	1	1						
94	Yucatan Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes pygmaeus</i>		1		3	6	4	7				2
95	Golden-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes aurifrons</i>					1						

	Common name	Scientific name	November											
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
96	Golden-olive Woodpecker	<i>Piculus rubiginosus</i>			1									
97	Ivory-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus flavigaster</i>					1							
98	Eastern Wood-pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>					H							
99	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>										1		
100	Bright-rumped Attila	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>										1		
101	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>		6	12	12	4	1	4	6	2			
102	Couch's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus couchii</i>		H										
103	Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarynchus pitangua</i>					1	6	2					
104	Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>		1	4	4	1	6			2			
105	Piratic Flycatcher	<i>Legatus leucophaeus</i>												
106	Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>		6	6	6	4		4	2	1			
107	Masked Tityra	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>				1	1	1	1					
108	Mangrove Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albilinea</i>			1					30+	6			
109	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>				20			4					
110	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica erythrogaster</i>							1		6			
111	Yucatan Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus yucatanicus</i>									2			
112	Spot-breasted Wren	<i>Thryothorus maculipectus</i>					H							
113	Grey Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>		1										
114	Tropical Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gilvus</i>		1	3	4	4	2	2	6+	6+	6		
115	Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>					1							
116	Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>			4	1								
117	Clay-coloured Thrush	<i>Turdus grayi</i>					H							
118	Blue-grey Gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>									1			
119	Yucatan Jay	<i>Cyanocorax yucatanicus</i>		12	5	4								2
120	Green Jay	<i>Cyanocorax luxuosus</i>			5		1			1				
121	Brown Jay	<i>Psilorhinus morio</i>				7	4							
122	White-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>		2		2		1						
123	Mangrove Vireo	<i>Vireo pallens</i>								H	1			
124	Yucatan Vireo	<i>Vireo magister</i>		4										
125	Northern Parula	<i>Parula americana</i>									1			
126	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>			1						1			
127	Mangrove Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>									2			
128	Magnolia Warbler	<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>			1	3				1	1	1		

	Common name	Scientific name	November										
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
129	Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>		2	2				1	2			
130	Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>											
131	Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>		8							2		
132	Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>		2	1	1						2	
133	American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>			2		1				1	2	
134	Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>			1							1	
135	Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>									H	1	
136	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>										2	
137	Hooded Warbler	<i>Setophaga citrina</i>			1	1				1			
138	Grey-headed Tanager	<i>Eucometis penicillata</i>				2	2						
139	Red-throated Ant-tanager	<i>Habia fuscicauda</i>				3	2						
140	Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>			2	1				1			
141	Yellow-winged Tanager	<i>Thraupis abbas</i>							1				
142	Olive Sparrow	<i>Arremonops rufivirgatus</i>					1						
143	Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>										2	
144	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>										2	
145	Black-headed Saltator	<i>Saltator atriceps</i>					1	1					
146	Greyish Saltator	<i>Saltator coerulescens</i>					1		1				
147	Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>										1	
148	Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>										1	
149	Yellow-backed Oriole	<i>Icterus chrysater</i>					1						
150	Altamira Oriole	<i>Icterus gularis</i>								2			
151	Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>		3					2	1		1	
152	Melodious Blackbird	<i>Dives dives</i>		4		H	1	20+	2				
153	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>		40	20	20	30	100+	40+	20+	✓	✓	
154	Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>		2		8	4	8	70+				✓

Mammals

1	Yucatan Black Howler Monkey	<i>Alouatta pigra</i>					2						
2	Central American Spider Monkey	<i>Ateles geoffroyi</i>					12+						
3	White-nosed Coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>		5									
4	Yucatan Squirrel	<i>Sciurus yucatanensis</i>		3	1		1	1	25+				

	Common name	Scientific name	November									
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
5	Grey Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>				2						
6	Central American Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>					1					
7	Cozumel Raccoon	<i>Procyon pygmaeus</i>								4		

Reptiles

1	Green Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>		1								
2	Morelet's Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus moreletii</i>			1					2	1	
3	American Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>				1				1		
4	Black (Spine-tailed) Iguana	<i>Ctenosaura similes</i>		30+	2	1		3	1	1	1	
5	House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	1									
6	Brown Basilisk	<i>Basiliscus vittatus</i>		1								
7	Mud Turtle	<i>Kinosternon sp.</i>			1							
8	Anole sp.	<i>Norops sp.</i>				1		2				
9	Yucatan Spiny-tailed Lizard	<i>Sceloporus chrysostictus</i>			1	1	1					
10	Yucatan Whiptail	<i>Cnemidophorus angusticeps</i>									1	
11	Marbled Treefrog	<i>Phrynohyas venulosa</i>									1	
12	Rio Grande Leopard Frog	<i>Lithobates berlandieri</i>									1	

Other Taxa

Zebra Longwing , *Heliconius charithonia*

Common Morpho, *Morpho helenor*

Sulphur sp., *Phoebis sp.*

Monarch, *Danaus plexippus*

Mexican Shoemaker , *Catonephele mexicana*

Hermit Crab, *Paguristes sp.*

Dragonfly sp., *Micrathyria debilis*

Giant Millipede, *Orthoporus ornatus*

Golden Orb Web Spider, *Nephila clavipes*

Spinybacked Orbweaver (Kite Spider), *Gasteracantha cancriformis*

Postman, *Heliconius erato*

Julia, *Dryas julia*

White Peacock , *Anartia jatrophae*

Grey Cracker, *Hamadryas februa*

White-striped Longtail, *Chioides albofasciatus*

Atlantic Ghost Crab, *Ocypode quadrata*

Common Green Darner, *Anax junius*

Tarantula, Family: *Theraphosidae*

Horseshow Crab, *Limulus polyphemus*

Malachite, *Siproeta stelenes*

Mexican Sister, *Adelpha*

Great Southern White, *Ascia monuste*

Mangrove Buckeye , *Junonia genoveva*

White-lined Sphinx Moth, *Hyles lineata*

Carpenter Bee, *Xylocopa sp.*

Saddlebags dragonfly, *Tramea sp.*

Paper Wasp, *Talisia olivaeformis*