

# Trinidad & Tobago

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 March - 3 April 2014



Pinnated Bittern by Pat Cole



Black Skimmers by Graham and Penny Saunders



Green Parrotlet by Graham and Penny Saunders



White-tailed Nightjar by Pat Cole

Report compiled by Paul Dukes  
Images courtesy of Pat Cole & Graham and Penny Saunders



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Tour Leader:	Paul Dukes	Naturetrek Naturalist
	Dave Ramlal	Local Guide – Trinidad
	Surin	Local Guide - Trinidad
	Gladwyn James	Local Guide - Tobago

Participants:

- Graham Saunders
- Penny Saunders
- Chris Hall
- Rob Hall
- Celia Davis
- Roger Davis
- David Hartill
- Francis Spowart Taylor
- Ann Spowart Taylor
- Anne Adams
- Peter Adams
- Lorraine Martin
- Pat Cole
- Peter Rickards
- Cynthia Rickards

## Day 1

## Saturday 22nd March

Shaking off the soporific effects of a trans-Atlantic flight we passed through arrival formalities at Trinidad's Piarco Airport and emerged into a balmy 30 degrees C early evening. Several of the group were soon deploying binoculars to look at Palm Tanagers and Tropical Mockingbirds in the sparse trees outside the Terminal, an early indication of an enthusiasm level that remained high throughout the tour! I looked in vain for my old friend Roodal Ramlal, who I thought would be the local guide for our tour, and began to feel anxious at his absence when one of the group members pointed to an athletic looking man sporting a leather gaucho hat who was standing nearby holding a clip board bearing the Asa Wright name. All became clear when he introduced himself as Dave Ramlal, Roodal's son and explained that as Roodal was accompanying another group he would be our guide for the week assisted by his friend Surin driving a second mini-bus. Dave is one of the top bird guides in Trinidad having learnt his craft alongside his father and as we were soon to discover, possesses both sharp eyes and an amazing ear for roadside bird calls which he somehow manages to hear whilst driving along in his vehicle. His cheery personality is also a great attribute for a leader and we were fortunate indeed that he had been allocated to escort our tour. Luggage was quickly stowed in the pick-up and we climbed into Dave and Surin's mini-buses for the 45 minute drive to the Centre.

Saturday night traffic filled the busy dual-carriageway from Piarco to Arima but after negotiating the outskirts of the town we soon began to climb up into the northern range of hills replacing the noise of the streets with the chirping of frogs and crickets in the forest. At length we reached the world-famous Centre and received a welcome rum-punch to revive spirits as the manager Ann handed out our room keys. Bags were conveyed to the appropriate locations, followed by the occupants of the rooms then, after the opportunity of a quick wash, we reassembled in the dining hall for a buffet dinner.

Although still only mid-evening body-clocks were telling us that it was well after midnight GMT and we retired early, but not before making plans for an exciting day around the Centre beginning with the dawn entertainment from the veranda. A party was in progress to celebrate the 85th birthday of an American lady staying at the Centre but even those with rooms nearby were soon soundly asleep.

## Day 2

## Sunday 23rd March

The night serenade of crickets and cicadas suddenly ceased at about 0530 as the first whistles and squeaks of the birds began and by 0600 the birds were in full voice, House Wren, Spectacled Thrush and tanagers leading the dawn chorus.

I made my way on to the verandah at 0545 but was soon followed by other AWC guests as we assembled for the morning performance. It was comforting to note that the two hot drink urns were already bubbling nicely and fresh brewed coffee helped the waking up process. Turning attention to the newly replenished bird tables and hummingbird feeders we found an ever increasing horde of avian arrivals heralding another 12 hours of veranda entertainment. Many years of visiting Trinidad have not blunted the sense of excitement and anticipation that I felt, sitting with my cup of coffee watching the forest wake up. First on parade were the immaculate, but pugnacious, White-necked Jacobins, ready to see off intruders from the moment they began sipping the morning sugar solution. Palm Tanagers were soon feasting on the fruit and bread, quickly joined by their White-lined and Silver-beaked brethren, Spectacled Thrushes, Violaceous Euphonias and Crested Oropendolas. Swarms of tiny Bananaquits quickly dominated activities around the hummingbird feeders, competing with the jacobins, Blue-chinned Sapphires and White-chested Emeralds for the 'nectar' whilst Black-throated Mango and Copper-rumped Hummingbirds explored the choice of flowers in the garden. Almost imperceptibly, the late rising honeycreepers arrived and all at once the Bananaquits found their perches filled by a flood of purple and green bodies. These brightly coloured little birds rapidly asserted their presence so that on occasions every port on the feeders was occupied by either a Purple or a Green Honeycreeper with dozens more scrabbling to take over a position.

By 7am it was a riot of activity in front of the veranda. Kiskadee Flycatchers shouted their names, a Barred Antshrike sang his descending phrases from the undergrowth, Grey-fronted Doves bustled along the path below the tables and Blue-Grey Tanagers jostled with the other birds for the rapidly dwindling supplies of fruit. Rather more distantly, a Channel-billed Toucan posed for telescope views as it perched in the tree-tops and Orange-winged Parrots screeched their way across the valley. The ringing of a bell summoned us to our own breakfasts in the dining hall but we were anxious not to miss any of the action and were soon installed again for another hour or two on the veranda. Two or three Red-rumped Agoutis nervously emerged from the vegetation to scavenge beneath the tables and a tiny Tufted Coquette buzzed like an insect from flower to flower bringing the hummingbird tally to nine species as individual Green, Little and Rufous-breasted Hermits had all previously paid brief visits.

Other species seen during the morning included Black-tailed Tityra, Cocoa Thrush and Lineated Woodpecker. When the frenzied activity around the feeders abated slightly as the food was consumed we seized the opportunity to go for a leg-stretch along the Discovery Trail accompanied for a while by Dave.

A Ruby-topaz Hummingbird in a powder-puff tree near the Centre was unfortunately only in view for a few moments but further along the trail we had no such problems with displaying Golden-headed Manakins performing their bizarre courtship dance in the trees obligingly identified by a sign proclaiming 'Golden-headed Manakins'. Sadly however their black and white relatives, the White-bearded Manakins were inexplicably absent from their display ground, perhaps affected by the dry and hot conditions recently experienced on the island. A singing Plain Ant Vireo provided some compensation and nearby we had a real bonus in the form of a Common Potoo perched atop a dead stump in the forest looking at first glance like an extension of the tree. Through my telescope every feather of this extraordinary night bird could be appreciated.

The Bearded Bellbirds had been uttering their loud, explosive calls all morning and progressing along the Discovery Trail we finally had the opportunity to see these canopy-dwelling birds at their display ground although locating a calling bird was by no means easy even when the calls reached such a volume that they were actually painful to the ear and it seemed the bird must be perched only metres away. Needless to say they never were and only sharp eyes picked out the caller sitting on a branch high in the tree. A pair of Boat-billed Flycatchers and a Plain Brown Woodcreeper added to the bird variety whilst non-ornithological interest was provided by columns of Leaf-Cutter Ants carrying their spoils back to a nest, White-lined Sackwing Bat, Red-tailed Squirrel and a young Cook's Tree Boa coiled on a branch beside the trail which pleased all but one of the group, the exception keeping her eyes tightly closed as she has a phobia about snakes!

As Dave departed to his home we joined the line of diners filing into the restaurant for Sunday lunch then after the meal we spent more time on the veranda before undertaking a short walk along the entrance road. Perhaps I was a little rusty after six years away or maybe it was the affects of the hot weather but whatever the cause the birds were not much in evidence and we eventually returned to the veranda with Rufous-breasted Hermit and Ochre-bellied Flycatcher the two prizes on our walk. Back on the busy veranda there was a lot of late afternoon feeding activity which included regular visits by a lovely Brown Violetear and a tawny coloured Tegu Lizard Hoovering up scraps below the tables. A Black Hawk Eagle flew down the valley passing over the Centre and those who had wisely opted out of the walk reported a number of additions to our bird list including Streaked Flycatcher and Golden Olive Woodpecker. They also had their own intake of calories with the 4pm serving of cakes and refreshments for guests!

Gradually dusk settled over the grounds and it was rum punch time soon followed by the serving of our evening meal. It had been an absorbing day and we all retired to our rooms with heads filled with images of the brightly coloured tropical birds we had seen. Just to emphasise the point the post dinner entertainment was a video film portraying the Island's birds. In the early hours I heard a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl calling somewhere in the grounds but I suspect few others shared my insomnia!

## Day 3

## Monday 24th March

Following an early shower there was still a cloudy aspect to the Arima Valley at first light but this did not deter the tanagers and hummingbirds which soon began their daily routine as the bird tables were replenished. On this second morning session the group were confidently identifying most of the regular visitors but sometimes the darting hummingbirds or rugby-scrum of honeycreepers still caused a few furrowed brows.

Telescope views of more distant Channel-billed Toucan and Black-tailed Tityra added to the variety whilst numbers of Grey-rumped Swifts swooped over the trees, sometimes accompanied by a Band-rumped or two. A soaring White Hawk was an early sighting along with a Plumbeous Kite, several Scaled Pigeons and a male Tufted Coquette as well as the usual female on the vibernums.

After breakfast we set off for a day on the north coast travelling in two minibuses, one driven by Dave and the other by his keen-eyed assistant Surin. A Forest Elaenia sallying after insects above the parked vehicles was perhaps an omen for the day! The route normally followed for this excursion is a gradual climb through the Northern Range forests, stopping from time to time for roadside birding, a descent into the coastal plains bordering the Caribbean, and lunch near the little town of Blanchisseuse. As was soon apparent, the road north is currently in a very poor condition with extensive road works in progress and with the final leg to Blanchisseuse involving a two hour drive groups now only travel as far as the settlement of Brasso Seco before returning to the AWC by a different route. After a dull start to the day the weather slowly improved although varying degrees of cloud persisted around the hills and it remained windy. Two other mini-buses containing the American group led by Roodal were following behind us but we managed to arrange things so that the roadside stops were mostly at different locations. Our stops, usually initiated by Dave hearing calls in the forest, soon produced views of male and female Collared Trogons, Southern Beardless Tyrannulet and several soaring Black Hawks but perhaps the most impressive moment came when Dave heard a calling Swallow Tanager and as we disembarked, found it sitting at the top of a roadside tree. These beautiful tanagers are migrants which spend the winter in South America returning to the Northern Range in March or April making it by no means a certainty at this early date.

Near Morne Bleu, the highest point of the Northern Range, we went for a short stroll along a path which proved to be particularly productive for woodpeckers providing views of Chestnut, Golden Olive and Red-rumped, all three with nest holes nearby. A Rufous-tailed Jacamar nest hole beside the main road was somewhat less fortunate as a thin snake was visible at the entrance no doubt having dined on either eggs or young. Back on the trail we were surprised to see several Yellow-rumped Caciques in the forest but the most exciting encounter was with two superb male Swallow Tanagers displaying to one another just a few metres above the ground. We presumed a female and possibly a potential nest site were both nearby but the rivals were clearly very animated and returned repeatedly to the same spot where they postured and hopped about offering us amazing telescope views.

Back on our way to Brasco Seco we shared a few moments of roadside birding with the Americans as both groups watched an obliging Guianan (formerly Violaceous) Trogon closely followed by a Green-backed (White-tailed). Both trogons have been split in recent years from the South American species hence confusion in names when looking at any field guide published earlier than 2010! A raptor flying over was confidently identified as Ornate Hawk Eagle by the Trinidad experts but was a little too high for me although the nearby Black Hawks were an easier task. Also seen at this stop was a distant Yellow Oriole which I managed to focus my telescope on just before the trogons diverted attention away. Several Red-legged Honeycreepers were also quickly lost from view but numbers of Grey-breasted Martins perched on power lines across the valley were easier to observe.

Lunch at Brasso Seco was interrupted by a number of bird sightings beginning with Smooth-billed Anis and Caribbean Grackles in the adjacent patch of grassland then singing Rufous-browed Peppershrike and Greyish Saltator both of which offered fine views. A large moth also chose to land on my foot and initially resisted all attempts to release it before finally fluttering away.

Our Asa Wright picnic lunch was supplemented by a passing local who insisted on giving me a bagful of oranges he had clearly just collected for himself. This friendly man who introduced himself as John and announced he was over 80, assured me the oranges would be sweet as sugar and thus they proved to be!

A gradual return to the AWC after lunch was punctuated by a few birding stops. At the first, Tropical Kingbird and Tropical Pewee were showing well on telephone wires but at ground level Rufous-breasted Wren and White-flanked Antwren were rather harder to follow in the tangled undergrowth. Later we ate afternoon cakes at the usual place for this stop overlooking a valley just north of Morne Bleu. Here Blue-winged Parrots posed for us on wires above the road and Yellow-rumped Caciques were fussing around a small colony nearby. Dave was in his usual good form and managed to persuade a Ferruginous Pygmy Owl to perch in open view for us as it replied to the strange looking owl in a leather hat! Once again negotiating the road-works on the road south we eventually reached the Centre before dusk and managed to briefly glimpse a Trinidad Motmot beside the entrance road. There was also time to fit in a short period of birding on the veranda before rum punches arrived and signalled the end of another day. As the guests tucked into dinner we resisted the urge to compare notes with the American group but I felt sure that nothing they had seen could have bettered our fighting Swallow Tanagers!

## Day 4

## Tuesday 25th March

Our morning excursion was to visit the Aripo and Arena Forests in the lowlands which entailed a 0600 breakfast and 0630 departure in order to fit in birding before the intense heat of the day. Everyone was very punctual and before the other guests arrived for their breakfasts, we were enjoying some early morning birding at the roadside lower down the Arima Valley. A White-bellied Antbird remained stubbornly in cover but a nearby Red-crowned Ant Tanager was marginally more co-operative although always hard to see in the undergrowth. Nearer Arima we stopped again to look for some Trinidad Euphonias seen in this locality recently and it did not take long for Dave to detect this attractive little bird's call and locate a pair feeding typically on a kind of mistletoe. Sadly these also failed to play the game and we had only glimpses before they chose to move further away out of view. Almost predictably, the stop also produced several other sightings including Boat-billed Flycatchers, Yellow Warbler, Blue-black Grassquits and a rather dull looking Sooty Grassquit.

Despite the early start it was soon very hot in the savannah areas and this to some extent suppressed bird movement. There was no shortage of Tropical Kingbirds, Cattle Egrets and vultures, which spiralled in huge numbers over Wallerfield, but it was more of a problem finding some of the other specialities of the area. Dave and Surin persevered and eventually we met with some successes beginning with a splendid pair of Peregrines perched in a tree at close range. For some reason these handsome birds remained on their branch despite our scrutiny and we enjoyed some fantastic telescope views although it was so hot that the road tarmac was melting beneath our feet! Peregrines do not nest in Trinidad but I wonder if this pair might be thinking about changing their status? Close by we were entertained by Yellow-bellied Elaenias, many Tropical Kingbirds, a singing Black-crested Antshrike, Barred Antshrike and most spectacular of all, a lovely Little Cuckoo which showed off his foxy-brown plumage and yellow bill in a rare extrovert display. Elsewhere, a Grey Hawk sat for many minutes in open view, Green-rumped Parrotlets clambered around the entrances to their nest holes in some pipes and Ruddy Ground Doves clattered out of roadside bushes. Both Short-tailed and Fork-tailed Palm Swifts were observed dashing over the savannah and most of the group saw a lone Yellow-headed Caracara.

Roadside stops at the fringes of Arena Forest produced another Green-backed Trogon and three Streaked Xenops acting like Treecreepers as they fluttered along branches. Once again a White-bellied Antbird responded to Dave's tape but failed to emerge from cover. Moving a short distance along the road we ate another excellent picnic lunch in a shelter beside the entrance to Arena Forest reserve, sharing the meal with a Forest fire-watcher who seemed surprised at the sudden influx of people. Trees near the shelter attracted at least three Turquoise Tanagers to explore the numerous epiphytes growing on the branches and I obtained good views of a Piratic Flycatcher beside the road. The ruins of an old building close by merited investigation and inside we found a dozen or more Sackwing Bats but no roosting owls. Many years ago I recall Barn Owls occupying another old building in the vicinity but today nothing remains of that structure and I wonder if the same fate awaits this large but very dilapidated house.

After demolishing the meal we headed back to the Asa Wright Centre and spent the remainder of the day on the veranda and in the grounds. A Guianan Trogon was one of the species seen during the afternoon, the Potoo was still pretending to be a branch, and a Northern Waterthrush showed a few times along the entrance road. The now-familiar routine of the Centre embraced us all as pulses of birds attended the feeders, human visitors arrived then departed again and at 4 the appearance of afternoon cakes obliged us to sample just a few in order to not seem impolite! There was always something to see from the veranda whether it be Crested Oropendolas indulging in their noisy displays, Agoutis sitting beneath the bird tables munching fingers of toast or the constant activity of the hummingbirds as the smaller species tried to evade the pugnacious Jacobins and snatch a few sips of sugar water. The experience of watching these diminutive creatures performing impossible aerial manoeuvres just a metre from your face is truly unforgettable and one of the sights for which the Asa Wright Centre is justifiably famous.

## Day 5

## Wednesday 26th March

Pre-breakfast on the veranda witnessed the usual rush of birds to the feeders and today we had perhaps our best views of Channel-billed Toucan as one individual spent a long period perched in the open as if greeting the new dawn. The branch from which he surveyed the valley immediately became known as the 'Toucan tree' and was occupied most mornings although at times by other species such as Black-tailed Tityra and Crested Oropendola! The resident Barred Antshrikes continued to be very vocal below the veranda but rarely emerged from cover however a striking male Great Antshrike was much more obliging in this respect even perching on a handrail as he made his way through the shrubbery. A White Hawk soaring over the valley gave everyone a chance to catch up with this attractive raptor.

Today's agenda included a visit to Dunstan Caves for the Oilbirds and after breakfast we joined an AWC guide to visit Dunstan Cave, the site of the oilbird colony. The Guacharo trail is quite steep in places and more demanding than some other trails in the grounds but easily negotiable with care and progress is invariably slow as distractions tend to occur which on this occasion included a Tarantula snugly tucked inside a hollow hand rail, a huge Caligo (or Owl) butterfly and a flock of birds attending a line of ants in the forest. Although shortage of time precluded a detailed inspection of the participants we did identify both Plain Brown and Cocoa Woodcreepers, Red-crowned Ant-Tanager and White-flanked Antwren during a few minutes of watching the flurry of activity which was frustratingly obscured by trees. Several Golden-fronted Greenlets were also noted but did not perform very well.

Safely assembled down in the valley, some of the group scrambled over rocks to admire a Rufous-breasted Hermit suspended beneath Heliconia leaves and a small colony of Tent-maker Bats peering out at the world from beneath a fold in the leaf that they had used to create a desirable waterproof home. Two at a time we then made our way to the mouth of the grotto from where the Oilbirds could be viewed. These peculiar nocturnal birds are certainly quite extraordinary and it is not surprising that early explorers, on hearing the assortment of shrieks and noises produced by the birds, thought that such caves were inhabited by evil spirits. Surprisingly large birds, the Oilbirds were mostly sitting on ledges at the back of the cave but several flew around as we watched, their long wings and tail giving an almost falcon like silhouette. A few birds also occupied ledges just above the entrance and these were ideal subjects for photographs. A partial collapse of the cave roof now allows much more light into the interior, but this doesn't seem to have upset the Oilbirds and simply makes viewing easier than before, particularly when the sun was shining. As always, it was a magical experience and a privilege to share a few moments with these remarkable birds. Viewing has been greatly improved by the construction of a wooden platform which makes things much easier than before. The climb back up the trail was slightly disappointing as the ant flock had moved away but several interesting birds were seen including a Streaked Xenops in the huge Mango tree at the top of the trail and fleeting glimpses of a Guianan Trogon.

With Dave and Surin not expected until 4pm we had another long period to enjoy the birdlife of the AWC and two of the less regular hummingbirds, the Brown Violetear and the huge Green Hermit, both paid regular visits to the feeders during the afternoon.

We departed for the night birding soon after 4pm but not before hastily grabbing a few savouries from the afternoon selection which arrived a little earlier than usual to allow our indulgence. First stop was the Agricultural Research Station at Wallerfield where Dave had lined up a roosting Tropical Screech Owl for us to see and other birds around the area we would be returning to later included Tropical Kingbirds, Green-rumped Parrotlets and a few Wattled Jacanas. Speeding next to Wallerfield Airfield we parked by the surviving stands of Moriche Palms and searched for some of the special birds found in this rare habitat. The big, rather sluggish Sulphury Flycatcher was no problem with several offering good views in the palms but the Moriche Oriole eluded us despite a pair being present on Dave's previous visits. Scores of, mostly Black, Vultures soared overhead and several Fork-tailed Palm Swifts dashed through the evening sky. A Northern Waterthrush appeared briefly and Tropical Kingbirds were prominent in the surrounding scrub. We could have spent much longer at this remnant of the formerly extensive habitat but it was soon time to return to the Agricultural Research Station where Dave swiftly organized the rum-punches and a tasty buffet evening meal eaten under the envious gaze of several local dogs. Dave disapproves of feeding the strays but I could not resist sharing my meal with a suitably appreciative, and it has to be said, fairly plump dog.

A Striped Cuckoo calling from behind the buildings remained unseen but soon darkness settled and we prepared for the night birding drives. Following a loop road around the Research Station we scanned the farmland with two powerful spot-lights which no doubt livened up the night for the herds of Water Buffalo and cattle inhabiting the Research Station. Unfortunately the hoped for night birds were in short supply although after much driving fairly unsatisfactory views of White-tailed Nightjar, Pauraque and Common Potoo were all eventually achieved. A few short walks along the road provided further entertainment for the livestock and more flashlight bird sightings whilst the lights around a milking shed complex had attracted a very large moth and several corpulent Cane Toads to divert us from the birds.

Having more or less seen the three main objectives we left the Research Station arriving back at the AWC by around 2100. Some of our fellow guests were out on the entrance road taking part in one of the regular 'bug-hunts' as we entered the grounds but our beds awaited and we were soon back in our rooms.

## Day 6

## Thursday 27th March

A fifth pre-breakfast vigil on the veranda witnessed no less than three Channel-billed Toucans watching sunrise, a trio of Turquoise Tanagers in the bushes and occasional visits by at least one Red-legged Honeycreeper. Also seen were both Rufous-breasted and Green Hermits, Tufted Coquettes and one or two distant Black-tailed Tityras.

Nariva Swamp was our objective for the day with the two mini-buses departing soon after 0830. First stop was in dry savannah grasslands at Wallerfield where we once again turned into the Agricultural Research Station to sample the range of new birds in this change of habitat. Driving past the scene of last night's meal we left the vehicles and wandered a short distance along a farm road bisecting large overgrown fields dotted with occasional tall trees and shelters for the cattle which were grazing in some of the paddocks. As usual, the multiple appearances of new species made it difficult for tour members to know which way to look first as fresh names were called out but eventually everyone managed to get satisfactory views of all the Research Station residents. Primrose winged Wattled Jacanas were among the first additions followed by noisy Southern Lapwings, White-winged Swallows flying around our heads, flocks of Cattle Egrets stalking around the livestock and some rather photogenic Green-rumped Parrotlets. Flycatching Tropical Kingbirds were numerous and other birds taking their toll of the insects included a number of dapper White-headed Marsh Tyrants and several Pied Water Tyrants. With the hot weather having reduced the areas of standing water, every ditch was a magnet to waterbirds and in one of the widest streams we found several Purple Gallinules, more Jacanas and a wonderful Pinneated Bittern which was so intent on catching some unseen prey that it remained motionless for many minutes just 20 metres away, allowing the kind of views that these secretive birds are not supposed to offer!

A few Grassland Yellow Finches roamed the weedy fields looking rather canary like as they perched on seed heads but rather more showy residents were the smart Red-breasted Blackbirds flaunting their scarlet chests in display. Overhead literally hundreds of Black Vultures were drifting and spiralling in the morning thermals accompanied by a few Turkey Vultures, whilst a Savannah Hawk observed us from a distance but eventually flew nearer to perch on a tree where we could see every detail of his handsome plumage through the telescope. Nearby several Yellow-chinned Spinetails chattered away from roadside vegetation and perched on the wire fences, one even exploring a roll of rusting barbed wire lying near one of the buildings. Ruddy Ground Doves were common around the Station but an equally large number of feral pigeons competed for the grain. We looked in vain for a calling Striped Cuckoo and had unsatisfactory glimpses of a Bran-coloured Flycatcher before a heavy shower sent us back to the mini-buses and it was time to take our leave of this very productive area for birds. As we departed a Spectacled Caiman seen earlier in the day was still in the same place at the edge of a ditch, mouth wide open as if to display his impressive set of teeth.

Continuing south after a brief 'comfort-stop' at Vallencia, we reached the coast at Manzanilla Beach and turned into a palm-fringed recreational area beside this long curving Atlantic beach. Dave and Surin prepared lunch as we gazed out at the breakers, watched in anticipation by a few lethargic dogs lying in the sun.

The sea was quite rough discouraging any thoughts of bathing but a few locals were relaxing on the beach. Manzanilla is the archetypal Caribbean coastline, a curving strand of palm fringed yellow beach which stretches for many kilometres to the south but it was noticeable that the high water level was right up against the promenade and apparently some structural damage had been caused here recently. Out to sea we could see a few Frigates ranging around offshore and some very distant Brown Pelicans. Usually Grey-breasted Martins are much in evidence around the car park and nest in the buildings but today only a few were at home although opportunist Carib Grackles wasted no time looking for scraps. Once the delicious lunch had been demolished, and the scabby undernourished dogs provided with their meal of the year (much to Daves disapproval), we boarded the mini-buses to complete the final part of the journey to Nariva. To the left of the road coconut groves extended the length of the shore, whilst to our right, a narrower belt of palms bordered the edge of the vast patchwork of forest, bushes and marsh which comprises Nariva Swamp.

Dave and Surin drove slowly along the road looking for birds, much to the annoyance of the various motorists racing along the coast road like trainee Lewis Hamiltons. It is not conducive to relaxed birdwatching when a car suddenly roars past with a blast of horn and sound system set on maximum but we persevered in the early afternoon heat and saw a few species along the way including the anticipated Yellow-headed Caracara, a very close Savannah Hawk, and a Grey Hawk. Planned stops further along the road allowed us to look for a few of the mangrove specialities at several places where fingers of marsh extend to the edge of the highway. Unfortunately the fierce afternoon heat did not help our activities but thanks to Dave's perseverance the areas yielded Striated Heron, Black-crested Antshrike, an elusive Squirrel Cuckoo high in the canopy, Northern Waterthrush, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Green Kingfisher and finally a Pygmy Kingfisher which flew round the group as Dave played his tape.

The appearance of a few egrets beside the road heralded our arrival at the main wetland area, although at this time of the year it is something of a misnomer to refer to a swamp as very little water remains and most of the seasonal marsh is now given over to watermelon cultivation or filled with swaying grasses. Turning off the main road we followed a road bisecting the 'marsh' giving access to the scatter of fisherman's huts standing on stilts to offer protection during the higher water levels of summer. It seemed to me that even since my last visit even greater areas had been burnt and taken over for cultivation but apparently the core swamp remains unaffected. Whatever the future, few waterbirds remained in the dried up ditches but as we toured around we did see many Smooth-billed Ani, typical birds of cultivation. A Grey Kingbird by the road proved to be our only Trinidad sighting, a few Marsh Tyrants and Water Tyrants were catching insects and Wattled Jacanas took advantage of any patch of water remaining. At least four Great Egrets were noted in the fields and interestingly their European counterparts will also feed in farmland where they catch small mammals.

Continuing along the road, Dave took us along a bumpy track which brought us to a point overlooking a small copse. Here we enjoyed an early serving of rum punches and cakes whilst the traffic of birds into the trees gave telescope views of Yellow-headed Caracara, Savannah Hawk, Lineated Woodpecker and Giant Cowbirds. Rather more surprising was a solitary Red Howler Monkey draped over the branches of a tall tree. Apparently this individual had been in the area for some months and Dave thought he was an outcast from a Nariva troupe that had been attracted by the fruiting trees in the copse. The monkey did not seem disposed to any expenditure of energy and was still watching as we packed up the vans and departed half an hour later. Perhaps he was thinking that but for a twist in evolution he too could be standing on a hill getting burnt by the sun and sipping an alcoholic drink...

The return to the coast road did not bring any sightings of the hoped for Yellow-hooded Blackbirds but an immature Long-winged Harrier swept briefly over the fields and the front van occupants also glimpsed a Zone-tailed Hawk. Previously a visit to Nariva would conclude by watching Red-bellied Macaws arriving at their roost in a line of palms near the marsh but in recent times the macaws had become much less predictable and with no sign of incoming birds at the copse, Dave decided that it would be futile waiting until dusk.

Before beginning the long drive back to Arima we made one last stop to look at a roadside nest of the rare Moriche Oriole and succeeded in seeing the birds perched nearby although it has to be said that in the fading light they were not the best of views and it required a little imagination to see the salient plumage details. There ensued an hour or so of driving in occasionally heavy traffic before we left the chaos of the main road and began the now familiar climb into the hills finally arriving back at the AWC in good time for a late evening meal followed by a 'bug-hunt' for those who still had energy left. Apparently this produced an assortment of creatures including Land Crabs and a Tarantula but I missed out due to the late appearance of my meal.

## Day 7

## Friday 28th March

Although designated a 'free-day' in our itinerary, most of the group elected to try for Leatherback Turtles later in the day necessitating another 4pm departure. Before this the last full day at the Centre was spent by the tour members in a variety of ways, some pursuing photography whilst others explored the trails. Everyone spent some periods on the veranda and among today's performers were a Bearded Bellbird perched in view down the valley, Channel-billed Toucan, a White Hawk sat in a tree, Red-legged Honeycreepers, Blue Dacnis, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Brown Violetear and Tufted Coquette. Species seen by members of the group in the grounds included; Lineated Woodpeckers, Plain Brown and Cocoa Woodcreepers, White-flanked Antwren, Northern Waterthrush, White-bearded Manakin, White-necked Thrush and the only American Redstart of the tour.

After enjoying the tea and savouries on the verandah at 4pm we departed for the east coast to try for the Leatherback Turtles at Matura. After enduring a 30 minute wait in a traffic queue outside Valencia we finally turned off the main road and entered an area of rather pleasant open countryside with plentiful trees but there was no time to stop as we wanted to reach the turtle beach in daylight in order to serve the picnic evening meal before nightfall. In the small town of Matura we collected a member of the turtle protection organisation and completed the drive to the isolated beach site down a bumpy track which is closed to all except those with permission to view the turtles. A Common Ground Dove feeding beside the road was duly noted and became the second new bird of the day.

The roast lamb meal was unpacked and set out in the hut which serves as the centre of the evening activities. Dusk was beginning to envelop the trees as we finished the excellent fare and joined the team on the beach ready for the first turtle to come ashore. At this point I would dearly love to detail an evening of outstanding success with multiple turtle encounters but sadly fate had determined that this was not to be and tonight our vigil stretched from minutes into hours with no sign of the flashing red lights which the wardens use to advise that a turtle is ready for viewing. The attraction of being on a lovely palm-fringed Caribbean beach with stars twinkling overhead and fireflies flashing above the shoreline could not be denied but we were all desperate to see the ocean wanderers haul themselves up the beach. Patrols marched up and down the coastline searching for an egg laying female but although one did apparently land for a few moments it quickly went back out to sea again, a not uncommon occurrence.

We knew that it was early in the season and success could not be guaranteed but started the evening with great confidence especially as turtles had been seen on previous evenings. Eventually it became evident that a decision had to be made and with heavy hearts we abandoned the beach soon after 11pm and began the long journey back to the AWC. If we had stayed later it was possible that a turtle may have arrived but there was an equal chance that the night would be a blank one and with a busy day to follow it was important that our drivers were not too weary. Whatever the reason our gamble had failed and we were in a subdued mood when we disembarked from the vehicles at the Centre soon after midnight.

## Day 8

## Saturday 29th March

Our final action-packed day at the AWC began like all the others with the convening of the 6am club on the veranda and the gradual coming-alive of the forest birds. As the tanagers, thrushes and honeycreepers flew in to sample the morning fare on the tables there was a poignancy about this being our final free show but the performers came and went in their usual manner and a new intake of guests marvelled at their first morning in the stalls as we 'veterans' exchanged knowing glances! A Bearded Bellbird was again on view and the Brown Violetear made an unaccustomed morning visit to the feeders having previously been an afternoon bird. A Red-legged Honeycreeper also appeared for the third consecutive day, and there were 'farewell' appearances by Scaled Pigeon, Channel-billed Toucan, Barred Antshrike and Ochre-bellied Flycatcher.

After breakfast we joined Dave and Surin at the start of a long day in the field which would involve visits to Waterloo mud-flats, Caroni Swamp and other wetlands on the west side of the island. First stop was at Trincity Water treatment ponds just off the main highway into Port of Spain. These tree-fringed freshwater ponds have a distinguished history of rare bird sightings and formerly rewarded even the briefest of stops but a new building development has virtually engulfed the site and only a couple of ponds now remain. Fortunately the thick carpet of water hyacinth still provided habitat for Yellow-hooded Blackbirds, the reason for our stop, and we soon saw twenty or more, the males resplendent with their bright yellow heads.

Rejoining the ceaseless streams of traffic on the expressway we continued towards Caroni but Dave set off a few minutes ahead of Surin and as a consequence the leader was lost from sight, a separation that would later result in arriving at different localities! From Trincity we endured the heat and noise of the very busy main roads for another 45 minutes as we made our way to the area know generally as Waterloo, a flat uninspiring stretch of mudflats and fields south of Caroni Swamp renowned as a mecca for shorebirds. Surin's vehicle visited two of the three recognized birding locations at Waterloo without finding Dave but the group were eventually reunited at the third where a feast of birds awaited us on the mudflats exposed beside the waters of the Gulf of Paria. A large, and very noisy flock of newly arrived Laughing Gulls in pristine summer plumage dominated the scene to the left of our viewpoint and among them we spotted at least four larger Lesser Black-backed Gulls, scarce winter visitors to Trinidad. Scores of Little Blue and Tricoloured Herons were dotted over the mud and with them two Great Blue Herons. The herons were no doubt hoping to catch some of the many Fiddler Crabs unaware as a great many of these mud inhabitants were scuttling over the mud, waving their colourful claws as if taunting the predators. Black Skimmers passed by pursuing their unique feeding method in the shallows and were part of a large flock gathered near the Hindu Temple which we had briefly seen during Surin's attempts to find Dave.

Fluorescent Scarlet Ibis probed the mud alongside Willets and Whimbrel. A scan of the mud to the north of the narrow causeway revealed more of the same plus a flock of Southern Lapwing, some Semi-palmated Sandpipers and a few Yellow-crowned Night Herons. The exciting half an hour at this locality also produced Turnstone, Spotted Sandpiper, Brown Pelican, Neotropical Cormorant and Royal Tern.

Returning to the Hindu Temple we passed a Long-winged Harrier hunting over the fields with that lovely languid flight typical of this elegant raptor. Assembled back at the Temple we found that the tide had advanced a great deal since our earlier visit but the birds were still in abundance albeit constantly changing position as their mud islands disappeared. Telescope inspection of the Black Skimmer flock revealed several Royal Terns mixed among them and a number of Large-billed Terns were present nearby, occasionally taking flight to display their distinctive black and white wing pattern. Great and Snowy Egrets fished the creeks along with Little Blue and Tricoloured Herons whilst there were also two Great Blue Herons here, which by plumage were different to the earlier pair. Some 40+ Brown Pelicans were crowded onto a boat moored offshore and several Neotropical Cormorants were diving in the Gulf. A great selection of birds was completed by Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and yet more Willets.

We retired for our picnic lunch to a rather scruffy little area beside the sea best known to birders as a reliable site for the scarce Saffron Finch. We easily found these little canaries close by the dilapidated shelter which we used as a picnic base but not much else stirred in the midday heat apart from a pack of dogs which watched our lunch preparations with hopeful eyes. Dave did his best to drive them away but I confess once again to giving them a few morsels after the meal. Before leaving we watched a Lineated Woodpecker showing well beside the road but missed a conebill seen by another Asa Wright group arriving for their meal just as we vacated the lunch shelter.

With a few hours to spend before the afternoon boat trip, Dave tried a couple of areas in the mangroves not far from Caroni. One instant success ensued when playing a Clapper Rail tape encouraged two of these shy birds to emerge from cover and approach to within ten metres of our binoculars and cameras. A Black-crested Antshrike also responded to tapes and in the same spot we also saw Yellow-breasted Flycatcher and several Bicoloured Conebills. It was amusing to witness a male Conebill repeatedly feeding an immature Shiny Cowbird which had only to shiver its wings and make plaintive calls to receive another mouthful which seemed to puzzle the donor who appeared to know something was not quite right but found himself unable to resist the entreaties.

We joined a throng of people waiting to board boats for the 4pm Caroni Swamp tours but fortunately the AWC had reserved a boat especially for us and with Dave on board we set off on a rather slower exploration of the swamp than the numerous other vessels. Our boatman was also very knowledgeable about the swamp and explained the differences between the three kinds of mangrove as we began our navigation down the long straight channel leading into the main areas. Stops were made along the way to add Green-throated Mango to our list of hummingbirds, observe an Eared Dove crouching in its twig nest, and to admire several Boas coiled in vegetation over the water although one of our group might question the use of the word 'admire'. Dave's tapes brought a Straight-billed Woodcreeper to within a few metres of the boat and more Bicoloured Conebills revealed themselves in the mangroves. Several Greater Anis teased us with brief views but never seemed to perch for long and soon retreated into cover. After this brilliant start we could hardly fail and were soon beginning to encounter more herons and egrets amongst the trees as we approached the more open areas, these accompanied by more Scarlet Ibises which seemed to glow from tree perches deep within the mangrove forest.

Eventually we moored in a remote corner of the swamp to watch the ibis fly-past and this was Dave's cue to distribute cakes and rum-punches. At first there was a relative lack of action on this clear sunny evening but gradually the influx began and with drinks in hand we settled back to watch flock after flock of ibis, herons and egrets flying over the water to either pitch onto an island ahead of us or continue over the trees to another more distant site. Many hundreds of Tricoloured Herons arrived and then ever larger flocks of Scarlet Ibis appeared, the birds rapidly filling up the remaining patches of green on the island so that it soon became a vivid carpet of red. I have been fortunate to witness this spectacle many times but I cannot recall a more satisfying performance as the crimson of the setting sun, the pink sky and the scarlet of the ibises combined together to provide an enduring memory of our visit and a fine climax to a very enjoyable week of Caribbean birding. After a 40 minute drive along the ever busy freeway to Arima we were soon back at the AWC for the last evening meal of our stay.

## Day 9

## Sunday 30th March

Down the hill for one last time, as we drove to Piarco for an early-morning flight to Tobago. It was sad to wave goodbye to Dave and Surin who had been such pleasant company for the week, and also a bit unnerving to be cast out into the big wide world after the security of life at the AWC!

We checked-in with plenty of time to spare and twenty minutes after taking off from Piarco, the Caribbean Airlines aircraft touched down at Crown Point Tobago and we emerged into the morning heat. Predictably, Caribbean Martins flying above the buildings were the first Tobago bird speciality for our list, a noticeably bluer and darker looking bird than the Grey-breasted Martins left behind on Trinidad. At first there was no sign of our guide Gladwyn James but after about ten minutes a coach drew up in front of the almost deserted terminal building driven by the distinctive figure of the Tobago bird guide who greeted us with his loud booming voice which at close quarters had something of the quality of a Bellbird call! Gladwyn has now taken over guiding duties from his father Adolphus and having travelled a number of times with the parent I was amused to see how many of his traits had been inherited by Gladwyn who shares his dad's slow and measured approach to life.

First stop on a hot Tobago morning was a tourist beach at Pigeon Point where an assembly of terns and gulls on offshore rocks warranted telescope inspection. Trying to ignore the holidaymakers enjoying the sea we concentrated on the rocks and found the recently split Cabott's Tern (better known to us as Sandwich) among Laughing Gulls, Cayenne and Royal Terns. As it was Pigeon Point we looked at the doves here and found them to be Eared which seems to be the common species in the south of Tobago. The excellent water treatment works at Bon Accord is sadly no longer accessible but Gladwyn took us around the perimeter where Brown-crested Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia and Grey Kingbird were encountered and Barn Swallows were evident among the Caribbean Martins hawking insects over the pools. A number of ditches and creeks in the Bon Accord area yielded Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Little Blue Herons, Green Heron and Great Blue Heron whilst surrounding bushes produced Cocoa Woodcreeper, White-fringed Antwren, Banded Antshrike and Ruby Topaz Hummingbird. A final stop involved climbing a pile of earth to look over a wall onto two pools with waterside vegetation. These held an immature Ring-necked Duck, several Least Grebes, Moorhens, Purple Gallinules and a mostly concealed Black-bellied Whistling Duck. A stop at a supermarket replenished stocks of liquid before we began the long drive to Speyside, our base for the next four days. There were however two more birding stops to make and the first came as we entered the grounds of the former Hilton Hotel to scan over a large pool just inside the entrance gates.

Created as an environmental gesture to alleviate objections against the original hotel development, the lake has become a valuable asset to local birdlife and often turns up a few surprises. Today an Osprey was sitting in a tree overlooking the water and about ten Anhingas were distributed around the banks, some adults in breeding dress. Neotropical Cormorants were also present along with Tricoloured Heron, Snowy and Great Egrets, one of the latter perching in a tree so close to us that through the telescope it was not possible to get the whole bird into the field of view. A few Caiman were casting their beady eyes at the birdlife and a Great Blue Heron completed a nice variety of species around the pool. Green-rumped Parrotlets in a nearby tree reminded us that not all Trinidad birds had been left behind. Further along the journey another brief stop was made to overlook a small jetty where Brown Pelicans, Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns were gathered. A flock of about ten Semipalmated Plovers nearby added another species to our trip list and enabled us to appreciate the subtle differences between this Nearctic plover and our more familiar Ringed Plover back home.

One of the mysteries of science is that Tobago is only 21 miles long yet it seems to take forever to get from the south to the north despite good quality roads and relatively light traffic. At last, after passing through various immaculately maintained villages with very British names like Glamorgan and Mount Irvine, we finally reached the viewpoint overlooking Speyside and dropped down towards the coast for one last time. Idyllic coves and beaches along the way had been populated by a few Laughing Gulls and Brown Pelicans whilst roadside birds had included White-tipped Doves and Orange-winged Parrots in the forested areas. It was just a short drive to the Blue Waters Inn tucked away in a private cove a few kilometres outside the village and as we approached the hotel I could see from the way some tour members were looking at the azure waters of the bay, that swimming might be high on the afternoon agenda!

After sorting our rooms we adjourned for a late lunch in the superbly situated beachside restaurant then retired to our rooms for a spot of relaxation after a hot and tiring journey. Later in the afternoon a bird walk around the grounds of the hotel introduced some of the residents which included a nesting pair of Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Pale-vented Pigeons, White-tipped Doves, Yellow-bellied Eleanias, White-fringed Antwren, Ruby Topaz Hummingbird and Barred Antshrike plus of course the gangs of Rufous-vented Chachalacas which roam the gardens looking for handouts and create an awful cacophony of screeching calls at regular intervals through the day but particularly at first light! Later, sitting at the hotel bar sipping a cool coco-punch with the sound of the waves lapping on the beach, Trinidad already seemed far away and a tasty evening meal confirmed that the Blue Waters fare was not going to disappoint...

## Day 10

## Monday 31st March

The Blue Waters provided an early breakfast for us to facilitate a prompt 8am departure to the Tobago Rainforest. Despite living at the other end of the island, Gladwyn arrived before we had finished eating and we set off for the forest, a drive of about 45 minutes from the hotel. First however was a quick stop at the bridge just before Speyside where Gladwyn had seen a Belted Kingfisher on his way to the hotel. There was no sign of the kingfisher but a nesting pair of Red-crowned Woodpeckers, a Grey Kingbird and Black-faced Grassquits rewarded our stop. Some of the group were also lucky to see a Green Kingfisher along the stream. Children were on their way to school as we passed through the villages, their school uniforms looking pristine and clean on this Monday morning. We were soon climbing away from Roxborough into the Rainforest Preserve, the oldest forest sanctuary in the Caribbean, as proclaimed on a roadside sign.

The densely forested central spine of hills not only forms the geological back-bone to the island but is also the refuge of many interesting birds including the three Tobago specialities we particularly hoped to find; White tailed Sabrewing, Blue-backed Manakin and Yellow-legged Thrush. Stopping for some roadside birding before reaching Gilpin Trace we found a rich vein of species including a pair of Collared Trogons, a close Venezuelan Flycatcher, Barred Antshrikes and several Rufous-tailed Jacamars. Giant Cowbirds made fleeting appearances, Streaked Flycatchers called from the canopy and after disappointments on Trinidad we had several fine performances from Trinidad Motmots. Another Common Potoo afforded wonderful telescope views at its daytime roost but an Olivaceous Woodcreeper became the bird that got away as Gladwyn saw one approach towards us only to disappear deeper into the forest before anyone obtained views. Two Broad-winged Hawks gliding over a ridge were probably migrants and no doubt others would be passing if we had the time to carry out a raptor watch.

Before starting the morning walk we went first to the recently refurbished Bloody Bay lookout point to use the facilities there and inspected the new visitor building which is currently just a shell but will no doubt be an information centre when completed. The look out usually produces views of the local Great Black Hawks and we soon observed one over the distant forest with a second bird displaying even further away. Somewhat closer at hand was a Black-throated Mango female sat on a tiny nest perilously situated on a thin branch near the building. Our main stop after the comfort break was Gilpin Trace, a narrow trail through the heart of the forest which can be muddy at times providing a source of income for enterprising locals who hire out wellington boots to visitors with inappropriate footwear! It had however been quite dry recently and the entrepreneurs barely registered our arrival. From time to time however we were passed by small groups of tourists being escorted on a 'rain-forest' experience by intrepid guides but whether they enjoyed striding along the trail is a matter of conjecture!

We proceeded slowly, allowing time for the forest birds to reveal themselves but on this hot morning it was quite hard work with long periods of seeing very little. Blue-backed Manakins were almost constantly to be heard, uttering their variety of calls but obtaining views was a different matter and the same was true of Stripe-breasted Spinetails which 'peeped' away from the undergrowth at several places. White-necked Thrushes were seen and heard several times along the trail but we had progressed some distance before the fluty tones of a Yellow-legged Thrush proclaimed the presence of this shy forest thrush high in the canopy of a giant tree. Initially it was hard work obtaining views of this Blackbird look-alike but one was singing in a convenient position to line up the telescope and through the instrument we had good views of his bright yellow bill with a wider gape than our European species. The third member of the Gilpin trio, the White-tailed Sabrewing was also hard to find at first although we did see both Copper-rumped Hummingbird and Rufous-breasted Hermit in the forest. Inevitably however the first Sabrewing finally appeared albeit fairly distantly but on our return journey we came upon one bathing in a stream and enjoyed excellent close-ups as it sat preening beside the path.

Not far from this a pair of Stripe-breasted Spinetails appeared to be building a nest right next to the trail and like the Sabrewing allowed us to watch them at a few metres range. After hearing manakins throughout the walk we finally managed to see some displaying males but they were always in awkward positions and defeated my telescope attempts. Thanks to Gladwyn's ear for calls we met with a number of other forest inhabitants during the walk including Plain Ant Vireo, Golden Olive Woodpecker and Plain Brown Woodcreeper.

Back at the entrance to Gilpin Trail we ate our picnic lunch in a nearby wooden shelter and were entertained by two Trinidad Motmots which flew down to pick up scraps and came to within a few metres much to the delight of our photographers. A little more training and I am sure these birds will become hand tame. After the meal we began a gradual descent to the coast but before leaving the hills stopped by a stream where Gladwyn thought we might find some manakins. He was not wrong and we soon had very good views of a displaying male but the bird of the stop was perhaps a stunning male Collared Trogon which moved from perch to perch along the forest edge passing just beyond the width of the road from our clicking cameras. Once again the telescope image was only of half the bird because of the extreme close range!

Back at the Blue Waters there was plenty of time for some late afternoon relaxation and a little local birding with attractions such as another Black-throated Mango nest, the beach flock of ludicrously tame Turnstone and of course the unruly mob of Chachalacas.

## Day 11

Tuesday 1st April

The morning began in lively fashion with appearances by two winter visitors to the island, a Peregrine which swept over the hotel and a male Belted Kingfisher, initially mobile but later to be watched sitting in a tree overlooking the bay. After this excitement the rest of the morning was free for tour members to pursue their own agenda which for three of the party took the form of a scuba diving excursion over the coral reef.

Some of the group joined me for a bird walk along the track which begins by the hotel entrance gate and follows the side of the forested hill behind the complex leading eventually to the north coast. It was uncomfortably hot but this did not seem to deter the birdlife and a flock of Caribbean Martins delighted in flying very low over the track at great speed giving our best views so far of these attractive creatures as they whizzed overhead. Rufous-tailed Jacamars also provided excellent close-ups near their nest holes and other birds recorded included Barred Antshrikes, several Brown-crested Flycatchers, White-fringed Antwrens and Blue-black Grassquits. Both Copper-rumped and Ruby Topaz Hummingbirds also put in an appearance. Our cacti enthusiast Ann was delighted to find a number of plants covering trees beside the track, the first time on the tour that we had encountered any numbers of these interesting succulents. Back at the hotel, Pat, who had managed to hand-feed a Green Honeycreeper at the Asa Wright Centre had now added Chachalaca and Turnstone to her feeding list! Reunited for lunch we discussed our morning and all the usual Blue Waters birds had been seen including the Red-crowned Woodpeckers, Osprey, Pale-vented Pigeons, Ruby Topaz and Black-throated Mango Hummingbirds.

At 1.30 we boarded Frank Wordsworth's glass-bottomed boat at the Blue Waters quay and headed out over the reefs to Little Tobago Island. Frank was away somewhere so the guide for our trip was his son Zolani (known as 'Zee') who soon demonstrated he had the same line of patter as his dad! Steering across the slightly choppy waters beyond Goat Island, we passed a few Laughing Gulls and tropicbirds before arriving at Little Tobago where a slightly tricky dry landing was achieved on the narrow, wave washed quay. Resisting the temptation to tick the feral chickens which forage in the undergrowth, we climbed up through the forested slopes of the island stopping to look at Chivi Vireos, Trinidad Motmots and Spectacled Thrushes along the way. We also paused to inspect an Audubon's Shearwater nest burrow at the beginning of the trail but it was a bit of an effort to see the grey shape of the chick inside the chamber and most of us were content to just look at the nest hole from the path.

We paused for breath as the path levelled out and waited for a while at the ram-shackled building which serves a visitor centre, to watch mockingbirds, Blue-grey Tanagers and other small birds coming to seek drink from bamboo troughs. Sturdy Brown-crested Flycatchers and Yellow-bellied Elaenias also lined up to sip the water whilst other birds in the vicinity included White-tipped Doves and Ruby Topaz Hummingbirds. Unfortunately few of the drink containers had been filled and as a consequence the birds were not staying in the area for very long but before leaving we tipped some water in the troughs to benefit the next visitors. A little further along the trail we came upon an exquisite little lizard clinging to the bark of a tree which seemed to be a species of Gecko but as yet I do not have a positive identification to put in this report. Any photographic images gratefully received!

Continuing along the main path we continued up to the highest viewpoint where a wooden shelter affords some protection from the fierce sun. Here the wider panorama of the cliffs was easy to appreciate as tropicbirds glided past at eye level and boobies circled around the bay. Before reaching the vantage point Zee led a detour to show us a sitting Red-billed Tropicbird literally at our feet and a male White-tailed Nightjar motionless on a patch of ground just metres away. Watching this beautiful nightjar at such close range rather eclipsed our efforts on the night birding trip.

Compared to my last visit many more pairs of Red-footed Boobies were present and indeed dozens of tree top nests were evident. Both light and dark phase adults were present although most of the nesting adults seemed to be the paler form. Brown Boobies, formerly the commoner of the two species, were very much scarcer and none seemed to be on their usual ledges although some were fishing with the Red-footeds in the waters offshore. This traffic was not unnoticed by the many Magnificent Frigates which harassed both tropicbirds and boobies, especially offshore where the birds were feeding. It was the Red-billed Tropicbirds that perhaps created the most impressive spectacle as dozens of these exotic birds repeatedly flew past the watch point at eye-level or dashed over the sea below, long tail streamers giving them the elegance of oversized terns. Their screeching calls added an eerie almost prehistoric quality to the scene! A juvenile tropicbird was crouching just in front of the shelter and like the birds seen earlier it was almost fully grown and would soon be contending with the frigates in the cruel world beyond its nest! One or maybe two Ospreys drifted over the island and a Peregrine made a brief appearance, whilst other species over the bay included Caribbean Martins and Short-tailed Swifts.

The essence of Little Tobago is not the number of species but the overall spectacle of the seabirds in this wonderfully tranquil and picturesque setting with the St. Giles group of islands visible in the distance and the forested hills of the mainland just a few kilometres to the west. Although plenty of summer plumage Laughing Gulls were displaying noisily on the rocks below the cliff, terns were not yet in residence but in a month or so Little Tobago would also be home to Brown Noddies, Sooty and Bridled Terns.

Making our way back towards the quay along with other visitors we were brought to a stop by the amazing sight of a female White-tailed Nightjar sitting at the side of the dusty track apparently fast asleep. After many photographs had been taken, the line of people filed past the bird which continued to doze despite the tread of many boots only a metre from its head! There was some debate whether it was a stuffed bird placed on the path as an April Fool jape but it was well past midday and I think it simply demonstrated how confident the Nightjar was in the protective camouflage of its cryptic colouration even though in this instance a bit of surrounding foliage would have helped!

On the return trip to the Blue Waters our skipper took us over the corals and the clear, shallow water enabled us to have ringside seats for a wonderful show of tropical underwater life with our guide giving his own distinctive commentary. Groups of Black Surge wrasse and Creole Wrasse cruised the reef, and like actors crossing a stage, various other species swam into view below the observation glass. Zee missed little and rattled off the names like a Caribbean John Motson, as Stop-light Parrot-fishes, Four-eyed Butterflies, Blue Tang and many other exotic fishes made their appearances. Equally amazing were the diverse corals of many different forms and colours which he also identified for us. A huge Brain Coral loomed beneath the boat, contrasting with Fire Coral, Pillar Coral, Dead Man's Fingers and the rare towers of Black Coral. Giant Clam Sponges completed a whistle-stop introduction to the Reef and whetted the appetite for any of the group wishing to explore the underwater life in more detail.

## Day 12

## Wednesday 2nd April

After an early breakfast we again joined Gladwyn for a second visit to the Rainforest, the group split between those choosing to relax at the hotel and those ready to do battle with the forest birds. First stop along the road to Roxborough was for a roadside Tropical Kingbird nest in which the head of a young chick could be seen gaping for food as the parents collected insects nearby. Two Streaked Flycatchers also showed at this stop. A Great Black Hawk glided over the forest as we made our way into the hills, and once again both Shiny and Giant Cowbirds were noted at the roadside. A pair of Collared Trogons added colour to the forest edge not far from where the Potoo continued his or her occupation of its lofty perch.

Later we began our activities with a walk along a different trail known for lack of any other name as the 'reverse Gilpin or Niplig'. Somewhat more difficult to negotiate than the Gilpin, and often much muddier, it is less popular with hikers and perhaps as a consequence, always good for birding. Blue Backed Manakins are particularly plentiful in this forest and we were soon watching several males displaying from trees beside the path. Golden Olive Woodpecker, White-necked Thrush, White-tailed Sabrewing and Plain Brown Woodcreeper were also seen during the walk. We ate our sandwiches at the Bloody Bay look-out where birding distractions included a fine Venezuelan Flycatcher attracted by Gladwyn's calls, Red-legged Honeycreepers and the Black-throated Mango still sitting on her exposed nest.

Another trail leading away from the bridge where the trogon showed so well on our previous visit proved to be very rewarding. Two Rufous-breasted Wrens finally gave the kind of views we had been denied earlier, a pair of Yellow-legged Thrushes chased each other around the canopy and a Chivi Vireo appeared fleetingly. Birds seen were common to both visits such as Rufous-tailed Jacamars, Trinidad Motmot, Orange-winged Parrots and Copper-rumped Hummingbird. As we began the winding descent to Roxborough, for an early return to the Blue Waters, a perched, but distant, Great Black Hawk necessitated another brief stop. Before reaching the hotel we also paused at the stream by the Sugarmill wheel where perched adult and immature Yellow-crowned Night Herons made up for not having seen any at the Blue Waters. A male Black-faced Grassquit and a Grey Kingbird were both on view near the bridge and we had our closest views so far of Short-tailed Swifts swooping low over the ground. We had the best part of three hours daylight to enjoy our final afternoon at the Blue Waters, time to spend relaxing, swimming or birding according to taste. Sadly the activities also included the onerous task of packing as we had reached the end of our stay at this splendid hotel.

We would be taking away many enjoyable memories and hundreds of photos to remind us of our visit but as we sat down to another tasty evening meal beside the ocean served with Caribbean charm and humour by the waitress team of Erica and Marlene, I could not help wondering whether the environment would be quite so pleasant for our dinner tomorrow!

## Day 13

Thursday 3rd April

A leisurely morning was spent prior to a 10am departure to Crown Point for the return flight to Piarco and thence to Gatwick. Farewells were made to the typical Speyside birds such as White-tipped Dove, Pale-vented Pigeon, Red-crowned Woodpecker and of course the beach Turnstones which were last seen demolishing breakfast scraps on the sand. Gladwyn was a little late arriving, which was not a problem with the safety margin we had, but some of this began to evaporate when we were sent on a detour through the hills on narrow roads, presumably as a result of an accident on the main highway. Congestion at a bottleneck further reduced the margin but we eventually re-joined the coast road and despite heavier than usual traffic reached the airport over an hour before the flight to Trinidad. The domestic flight left on time and after checking in for the London flight at Piarco we were able to repair to the nearby food outlets to purchase lunch although the quality fell well short of the meals at the Blue Waters!

After a brief stop in St Lucia to pick up numbers of pink holidaymakers, we sped smoothly across the Atlantic and reached Gatwick more or less on time after a flight time of 7 hours 40 minutes boosted by strong tail winds. I thought it had been a very enjoyable tour and would like to thank everyone for your patience and good humour. The above report is inevitably a subjective account so please accept my apologies for any omissions or inaccuracies!

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## Species List

Birds (Figures in parenthesis - number of days seen)

<b>Least Grebe</b> <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	2 Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Red-billed Tropicbird</b> <i>Phaethon aethereus</i> island where several nests seen with young.	Offshore from Blue Waters & many Little Tobago
<b>Brown Booby</b> <i>Sula leucocaster</i>	Small numbers Little Tobago Island + nests
<b>Red-footed Booby</b> <i>Sula. sula</i> juveniles	30+ Little Tobago Island inc. several nesting birds +
<b>Brown Pelican</b> <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> (4) Trinidad with larger numbers Waterloo (40+)- Seen Tobago in small numbers	Small numbers offshore from coastal points on
<b>Neotropic Cormorant</b> <i>Phalacrocorax brasillianus</i>	4-5 Waterloo, several Hilton Pond Tobago
<b>Anhinga</b> <i>Anhinga anhinga</i>	10+ Hilton Pond Tobago
<b>Magnificent Frigatebird</b> <i>Fregata magnificens</i> (7) Little Tobago Island & offshore from Blue Waters	A few Trinidad -locally numerous Tobago especially
<b>Great Blue Heron</b> <i>Ardea Herodias</i> Tobago	c4 Waterloo Trinidad, Bon Accord & Hilton Pond
<b>Great Egret</b> <i>Egretta alba</i> (3) Waterloo & Caroni, several Hilton Ponds Tobago	Scattering on Trinidad wetlands with 3-4 Nariva,
<b>Snowy Egret</b> <i>Egretta. thula</i> (2) Pond Tobago	Nariva, Waterloo & Caroni on Trinidad & Hilton
<b>Little Blue Heron</b> <i>Egretta. caerulea</i> (3)	Waterloo & Caroni on Trinidad, Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Tricoloured Heron</b> <i>Eretta. tricolor</i> (2) Hilton Pond Tobago	Waterloo & Caroni (100's at dusk) on Trinidad –
<b>Cattle Egret</b> <i>Bulbulcus ibis</i> (5)	Common in lowlands
<b>Green Heron</b> <i>Butorides virecens</i>	3+ Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Striated Heron</b> <i>Butorides. striatus</i> (1)	Nariva
<b>Yellow-crowned Night Heron</b> <i>Nycticorax. violacea</i>	Some Waterloo & Caroni, 2 Speyside
<b>Pinnated Bittern</b> <i>Botaurus pinnatus</i>	One Wallerfield ARS
<b>Scarlet Ibis</b> <i>Eudocimus ruber</i>	500+ Caroni Swamp
<b>Black Vulture</b> <i>Coragyps atratus</i> (7)	Very Common Trinidad
<b>Turkey Vulture</b> <i>Cathartes aura</i> (7)	Locally numerous Trinidad
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b> <i>Anas discors</i>	4 Flying over Caroni Swamp
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b> <i>Aythya collaris</i>	Immature Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Osprey</b> <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Hilton Ponds, Little Tobago & Blue Waters
<b>Double-toothed Kite</b> <i>Harpagos bidentatus</i>	One seen several times Asa Wright Centre
<b>Plumbeous Kite</b> <i>Ictinia plumbea</i> (3)	Three singles Asa Wright Centre
<b>Long-winged Harrier</b> <i>Circus biffoni</i>	Immatures Nariva & Waterloo
<b>White Hawk</b> <i>Leucopternis albicollis</i> (5)	Arima Valley & Asa Wright Centre
<b>Common Black Hawk</b> <i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i> (6)	Regular Arima Valley & also on excursions
<b>Great Black Hawk</b> <i>Buteogallus. urubitinga</i>	2-3 over Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Savannah Hawk</b> <i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>	Several Wallerfield (ARS) & one north of Nariva
<b>Grey Hawk</b> (3) <i>Buteo nitidus</i>	Aripo & en route Nariva
<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b> <i>Buteo platyperus</i>	Two Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Zone-tailed Hawk</b> <i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	Single Nariva (not seen by all in group)
<b>Black Hawk-Eagle</b> <i>Spizeatus tyrannus</i>	One Asa Wright Centre
<b>Yellow-headed Caracara</b> <i>Milvago chimachima</i> (2)	Several around lowlands (Wallerfield & Nariva
<b>Peregrine</b> <i>Falco perigrinus</i> Little Tobago Island	Two Aripo, One flew over Blue Waters Tobago and
<b>Rufous-vented Chachalaca</b> <i>Ortalis ruficauda</i>	Widespread and locally common Tobago
<b>Clapper Rail</b> <i>Rallus longirostris</i>	At least two Caroni
<b>Purple Gallinule</b> <i>Porphyryla martinica</i> (3) Accord Tobago	Several Wallerfield ARS, Trincity Pond & Bon
<b>Moorhen</b> <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Several Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Wattled Jacana</b> <i>Jacana jacana</i> (3) Pond	Fairly numerous Nariva, also Wallerfield & Trincity
<b>Southern Lapwing</b> <i>Vanellus chilensis</i> (3)	Small numbers in lowlands (c20 Waterloo)

<b>Semi-palmated Plover</b> <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	10+ Tobago
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b> <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	Several Waterloo & Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b> <i>Tringa. flavipeps</i>	One Waterloo
<b>Hudsonian Whimbrel</b> <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	5+ Waterloo
<b>Solitary Sandpiper</b> <i>Tringa. solitaria</i>	c2 Bon Accord Tobago
<b>Spotted Sandpiper</b> <i>Actitis macularia</i> (5) – most Caroni	Ones and twos at several localities Trinidad & Tobago
<b>Willet</b> <i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	20+ Waterloo
<b>Ruddy Turnstone</b> <i>Arenaria interpres</i> (5)	Waterloo but also up to 10 daily Blue Waters
<b>Semi-palmated Sandpiper</b> <i>Calidris pusilla</i>	Several Waterloo
<b>Laughing Gull</b> <i>Larus atricilla</i> (5)	Common at Waterloo and around Tobago coast
<b>Lesser Black Backed Gull</b> <i>Larus fuscus</i>	At least four Waterloo
<b>Large-billed Tern</b> <i>Phaetusa simplex</i>	c30 Waterloo
<b>Royal Tern</b> <i>Sterna. maxima</i>	20+ Waterloo, 10-20 Tobago
<b>Cayenne Tern</b> <i>Thalasseus eurygnatha</i>	Several Pigeon Point Tobago
<b>Sandwich (Cabot's) Tern</b>	Several Pigeon Point Tobago
<b>Black Skimmer</b> <i>Rynchops niger</i>	c.100+ Waterloo
<b>Feral Pigeon</b> <i>Columba livia</i>	Common
<b>Pale-vented Pigeon</b> <i>Columba cayennensis</i>	Numerous & widespread Tobago
<b>Scaled Pigeon</b> <i>Columba. specios</i> (6)	Seen most days Asa Wright Centre
<b>Eared Dove</b> <i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	Numerous in south of Tobago & 1Caroni
<b>Common Ground Dove</b> <i>Columbina passerine</i>	1 on road near Matura
<b>Ruddy Ground-Dove</b> <i>Columbina talpacoti</i> (6)	Widespread & numerous in Trinidad lowlands
<b>White-tipped Dove</b> <i>Leptotila verreauxi</i> (5)	One or two AWC, numerous throughout Tobago
<b>Grey-fronted Dove</b> <i>Leptotila. rufaxilla</i>	Several daily AWC
<b>Green-rumped Parrotlet</b> <i>Forpus passerinus</i> (4) coast	Wallerfield & Aripo- Tobago at Hilton Pond & along
<b>Blue-headed Parrot</b> <i>Pionus menstruus</i>	10+ Blanchisseuse Road,
<b>Orange-winged Parrot</b> <i>Amazona amazonica</i> (11) islands	Widespread and numerous in forested areas on both
<b>Little Cuckoo</b> <i>Coccyua minuta</i>	One showed well Aripo
<b>Squirrel Cuckoo</b> <i>Piaya cayana</i>	One in mangroves near Nariva
<b>Greater Ani</b> <i>Crotophaga major</i>	5+ Caroni Swamp
<b>Smooth-billed Ani</b> <i>Crotophaga ani</i> (8)	Numerous in cultivated or grassy areas on both islands
<b>Tropical Screech Owl</b> <i>Otus choliba</i>	One seen Wallerfield ARS
<b>Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl</b> <i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i> along Blanchisseuse road	Heard most nights at AWC & seen on one occasion
<b>Common Potoo</b> <i>Nyctibius griseus</i> two seen on night birding at Wallerfield	Roosting birds at Asa Wright & Tobago Rain Forest,
<b>Oilbird</b> <i>Steatornis caripensis</i> (20+ seen but cave count is of over 170)	Dunstan Cave colony viewed during stay at AWC
<b>Common Pauraque</b> <i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	Seen during night-birding at Wallerfield
<b>White-tailed Nightjar</b> <i>Caprimulgus cayennensis</i> memorable pair on Little Tobago Island	Several at Wallerfield during night-birding, a
<b>Short-tailed Swift</b> <i>Chaetura brachyura</i> (4)	Locally numerous both islands but usually near coasts
<b>Band-rumped Swift</b> <i>Chaetura. spinicauda</i> (4) AWC & Arima Valley	Several identified among commoner Grey-rumped at
<b>Grey-rumped Swift</b> <i>Chaetura. cinereiventris</i> (9) Forest	Commonest swift Trinidad and also Tobago Rain
<b>Fork-tailed Palm Swift</b> <i>Reinarda squamata</i>	Wallerfield & Aripo
<b>Rufous-breasted Hermit</b> <i>Glaucis hirsuta</i> (7) Blanchisseuse Road but also seen Tobago Rain Forest (nest)	Seen most days AWC ( nest Dunstan Cave) & along
<b>Green Hermit</b> <i>Phaethornis guy</i>	Singles at AWC on four days
<b>Little Hermit</b> <i>Phaethornis. longuenareus</i>	Seen several times at AWC
<b>White-tailed Sabrewing</b> <i>Campylopterus ensipennis</i>	Several Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Brown Violetear</b> <i>Calibri delphinae</i>	Adult on four days at AWC
<b>White-necked Jacobin</b> <i>Florisuga melivora</i> (8)	A common resident at AWC
<b>Green-throated Mango</b> <i>Anthracothorax viridigula</i>	One Caroni Swamp

<b>Black-throated Mango</b> <i>Anthracothorax nigricollis</i> (11)	A few daily at AWC and a few sightings elsewhere also seen daily Tobago (2 nests)
<b>Ruby Topaz</b> <i>Chrysolampis mosquitos</i> (6)	Several at Wallerfield and most days at AWC, seen daily Tobago where one of the more commonly seen hummers
<b>Tufted Coquette</b> <i>Lophornis ornata</i> (6)	Female seen daily at AWC & male on several occasions
<b>Blue-chinned Sapphire</b> <i>Chlorestes notatus</i> (7)	One or two sporadically at AWC
<b>White-chested Emerald</b> <i>Amazilia chionopectus</i> (8)	Small numbers at AWC, some noted elsewhere
(Wallerfield)	
<b>Copper-rumped Hummingbird</b> <i>Amazilla. tobaci</i> (10)	Seen regularly on both islands
<b>Green-backed Trogon</b> <i>Trogon( viridis)</i>	Singles Blanchisseuse Road, & Arena
<b>Guianan Trogon</b> <i>Trogon( violaceus)</i> (3)	AWC & Blanchisseuse Road
<b>Collared Trogon</b> <i>Trogon collaris</i>	Pair Blanchisseuse Road, 3-4 birds Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Trinidad Motmot</b> <i>Momotus momota</i> (11)	Only one at AWC but seen daily Tobago at Blue Waters, Rainforest etc.
<b>Belted Kingfisher</b> <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	One Blue Waters
<b>Green Kingfisher</b> <i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	Female near Nariva
<b>Rufous-tailed Jacamar</b> <i>Balbula ruficauda</i> (4)	Blanchisseuse Road, Tobago Rain Forest & roadside in Tobago
<b>Channel-billed Toucan</b> <i>Ramphastos vitellinus</i> (7)	Up to three AWC grounds & 1 Northern Range
<b>Red-crowned Woodpecker</b> <i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i>	Blue Waters pair and another 6+ Tobago
<b>Red-rumped Woodpecker</b> <i>Veniliornis kirkii</i>	Pair Trinidad near Morne Bleu
<b>Golden-olive Woodpecker</b> <i>Piculus rubiginosus</i> (5)	Several AWC & Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Chestnut Woodpecker</b> <i>Celeus elegans</i>	One near nest Morne Bleu
<b>Lineated Woodpecker</b> <i>Dryocopus lineatus</i> (5)	Seen several days at AWC (nest) & also Waterloo area
<b>Stripe-breasted Spinetail</b> <i>Synallaxis cinnamomea</i>	Heard AWC then several Tobago Rain Forest including pair nest building
<b>Yellow-chinned Spinetail</b> <i>Certhiaxis cinnamomeus</i>	Wallerfield ARS (10+)
<b>Streaked Xenops</b> <i>Xenops rutilans</i>	Three Arena and one AWC
<b>Plain Brown Woodcreeper</b> <i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i> (4)	Several AWC and also one Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Straight-billed Woodcreeper</b> <i>Xiphorhynchus pica</i>	One Caroni Swamp
<b>Cocoa Woodcreeper</b> ( <i>Xiphorhynchus susurrans</i> ) (6)	Heard more than seen but good views of birds on both islands
<b>Great Ant-Shrike</b> <i>Taraba major</i> (3)	A few sightings AWC but heard more than seen
<b>Black-crested Ant-Shrike</b> <i>Sakesphorus canadensis</i> (3)	Seen near Nariva at Wallerfield & Caroni
<b>Barred Ant-Shrike</b> <i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i> (9)	Daily at AWC and 1-2 Wallerfield, Several Tobago esp. Blue Waters area
<b>Plain Ant-Vireo</b> <i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>	Discovery Trail AWC & Tobago Rain Forest
<b>White-fringed Ant-Wren</b> <i>Formicivora grisea</i> (3)	5-6 birds Tobago ( Blue Waters/Bon Accord/Tobago Rain Forest
<b>White-flanked Ant-Wren</b> <i>Myrmotherula axillaris</i>	Singles AWC & Blanchisseuse Road
<b>Bearded Bellbird</b> <i>Procnias averano</i>	Heard daily at AWC and seen very well
<b>Black-tailed Tityra</b> <i>Tityra cayana</i> (3)	3-4 AWC- usually at distance
<b>White-bearded Manakin</b> <i>Manacus manacus</i>	Seen most days at AWC but not lekking and rather scarce this year
<b>Blue-backed Manakin</b> <i>Chiroxiphia pareola</i>	Nice views Tobago Rain Forest where common
<b>Golden-headed Manakin</b> <i>Pipra erythrocephala</i>	Seen well AWC where several lekking
<b>Southern Beardless Tyrannulet</b> <i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>	Blanchisseuse Road
<b>Forest Elaenia</b> <i>Myiopagis gaimardii</i>	One AWC
<b>Yellow-bellied Elaenia</b> <i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>	Several Aripo/Wallerfield; seen daily Tobago mostly around Blue Waters
<b>Ochre-bellied Flycatcher</b> <i>Mionectes oleaginous</i>	1-2 AWC & one Tobago Rainforest
<b>Yellow-breasted Flycatcher</b> <i>Tolmomyias flaviventris</i>	Single Caroni mangroves
<b>Tropical Pewee</b> <i>Contopus cinereus</i>	Single Blanchisseuse Road
<b>Pied Water-Tyrant</b> <i>Fluvicola pica</i>	Seen in Trinidad lowlands near water
<b>White-headed Marsh-Tyrant</b> <i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i>	ditto

<b>Piratic Flycatcher</b> <i>Legatus leucophalus</i>	One Arena Forest (PAD only)
<b>Brown-crested Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	Single Nariva; 4-5+ Tobago
<b>Venezuelan Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiarchus venezuelensis</i>	Two singles seen well Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Great Kiskadee</b> <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i> (8)	Common AWC & widespread Trinidad
<b>Boat-billed Flycatcher</b> <i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i>	AWC and pair near Arima
<b>Streaked Flycatcher</b> <i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i> (3)	Pair AWC also seen Tobago Rainforest and along
coast road south from Speyside	
<b>Sulphury Flycatcher</b> <i>Tyrannopsis sulphurea</i>	3-4 seen very well Wallerfield
<b>Tropical Kingbird</b> <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i> (9)	Locally numerous Trinidad, 4-5 Tobago (nest + chick)
<b>Grey Kingbird</b> <i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	Single Nariva, several Tobago
<b>Golden-fronted Greenlet</b> <i>Hylophilus aurantifrons</i>	Seen a few times at AWC
<b>Rufous-browed Peppershrike</b> <i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>	Single Brasso Seco
<b>Chivi Vireo</b> <i>Vireo chivi</i>	Little Tobago & Tobago Rainforest
<b>Caribbean Martin</b> <i>Progne dominicensis</i>	Numerous Tobago
<b>Grey-breasted Martin</b> <i>Progne chalybea</i> (5)	Fairly numerous lowland Trinidad & Northern Hills
<b>White-winged Swallow</b> <i>Tachycineta albiventer</i> (4)	A few in lowland Trinidad especially Wallerfield
<b>Southern Rough-Wing Swallow</b> <i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>	Amazingly only seen once in Trinidad
<b>Barn Swallow</b> <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Numbers over Bon Accord
<b>Rufous-breasted Wren</b> <i>Thryothorus rutilus</i>	Frustrating on Trinidad but two seen well Tobago
Rain Forest	
<b>Northern House Wren</b> <i>Troglodytes aedon</i> (5)	Regular daily at AWC but elusive, a few
Speyside/Blue Waters & Rainforest edge Tobago	
<b>Tropical Mockingbird</b> <i>Mimus gilvus</i> (11)	Fairly numerous both islands
<b>Yellow-legged Thrush</b> <i>Turdus flavipes</i>	3+ Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Cocoa Thrush</b> <i>Turdus fumigatus</i> (7)	Seen most days AWC
<b>Spectacled Thrush</b> <i>Turdus nudigenis</i> (10)	Fairly numerous AWC, small numbers Tobago
<b>White-necked Thrush</b> <i>Turdus albicollis</i> (5)	Several AWC- fairly numerous Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Violaceous Euphonia</b> <i>Euphonia violacea</i> (8)	Fairly numerous AWC
<b>Yellow Warbler</b> <i>Dendroica petechia</i>	One near Arima
<b>American Redstart</b> <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	One AWC
<b>Northern Waterthrush</b> <i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	Seen a few times AWC also Wallerfield & Bon
Accord Tobago	
<b>Bicoloured Conebill</b> <i>Conirostrum bicolor</i>	Caroni Swamp inc male feeding Cowbird
<b>Bananaquit</b> <i>Coereba flaveola</i> (11)	Abundant-both islands
<b>White-lined Tanager</b> <i>Tachyphonus rufus</i> (9)	Numerous both islands
<b>Silver-beaked Tanager</b> <i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>	Common AWC
<b>Blue-Grey Tanager</b> <i>Thraupis episcopus</i> (11)	Small numbers AWC and on Tobago
<b>Palm Tanager</b> <i>Thraupis palmarum</i> (11)	Common both islands
<b>Turquoise Tanager</b> <i>Tangera mexicana</i> (5)	Small numbers AWC & Arena Forest
<b>Bay-headed Tanager</b> <i>Tangera gyrola</i> (8)	Small numbers AWC
<b>Blue Dacnis</b> <i>Dacnis cayana</i>	A couple of sightings AWC
<b>Green Honeycreeper</b> <i>Chlorophanes spiza</i> (8)	Seen daily at AWC
<b>Purple Honeycreeper</b> <i>Cyanerpes caeruleus</i> (8)	Numerous at AWC feeders
<b>Red-legged Honeycreeper</b> <i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>	A few AWC and small numbers Tobago Rain Forest
<b>Swallow Tanager</b> <i>Tersina viridis</i>	Female and two males near Morne Bleu
<b>Blue-Black Grassquit</b> <i>Volatinia jacarin</i> (3)	Locally small numbers Trinidad lowlands also Arima
Valley & near Blue Waters Tobago	
<b>Black-faced Grassquit</b> <i>Tiaris bicolor</i>	5-6 Tobago (Blue Waters/Speyside)
<b>Sooty Grassquit</b> <i>Tiaris fuliginosus</i>	One seen poorly near Arima
<b>Grassland Yellow Finch</b> <i>Sicalis luteola</i>	A few ARS Wallerfield
<b>Saffron Finch</b> <i>Sicalis flaveola</i>	A few near Waterloo
<b>Greyish Saltator</b> <i>Saltator coerulescens</i>	Singing male Brasso Seco
<b>Red-crowned Ant-Tanager</b> <i>Habia rubica</i>	Males seen poorly downhill from AWC and along
Oilbird trail	
<b>Red-breasted Blackbird</b> <i>Sturnella militaris</i>	10+ Wallerfield ARS
<b>Yellow-hooded Blackbird</b> <i>Agelaius icterocephalus</i>	20+ Trincity Ponds
<b>Carib Grackle</b> <i>Quiscalus lugubris</i> (7)	Numerous around Trinidad coast & south Tobago
<b>Shiny Cowbird</b> <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i> (4)	Locally in very small numbers both islands

**Giant Cowbird** *Molothrus oryzivorus*

**Yellow Oriole** *Icterus nigrogularis* (8)

Trinidad

**Yellow-rumped Cacique** *Cacicus cela*

**Crested Oropendola** *Psarocolius decumanus* (10)  
small numbers Tobago Rain Forest & Little Tobago

4-5 Tobago Rain Forest

Seen most days AWC - also a few other sightings

Morne Bleu also along Blanchisseuse Road

Numerous AWC, seen elsewhere in Trinidad & in

Other Taxa

Red-rumped Agouti

Opossum

Golden Tegú Lizard

Gecko spp (Little Tobago)

Spectacled Caiman

Fiddler Crab spp

Red-tailed (Trinidad) Squirrel

White-lined Sac-wing Bat

Common Ameiva

Cook's Tree Boa

Cane Toad

Red Howler Monkey

Fruit Bat spp

House Gecko

Boa spp.

Land Crab spp



Trinidad Motmot by Graham and Penny Saunders



Blue-chinned Sapphire by Pat Cole