Caribbean Conservation Trust ABA II CUBA Bird Survey
April 5-17, 2011

Compiled, written and photos by Michael J. Good, MS

Trip Summary:

We tallied **166 species** and counted **10,208 individual birds** during our 10 day field trip, covering **2,630 KM** around the country of Cuba. Subtracting the **2,406 Turkey Vultures** (a higher concentration than in the US and certainly Maine!!) and **1601 Cattle Egret**....that still leaves a respectable **6,201 individuals birds seen**!! (For details go to Ebird.org)

Participants: All participants were American citizens with varying degrees of birding experience. All very good in the field and excellent at locating birds in the scope and binoculars. We had one Photographer George Jett who helped to document many of the birds we saw. Everyone was engaging and involved and they were all gracious and understanding about the schedule of events for each day and the need to be prompt. Not one problem and we were never late for an early morning bird, like the Zapata Wren in La Turba or the Bee Hummingbird and Cuban Parrots in Bermejas. I enjoyed getting to know everyone and appreciated the opportunity to bird with them in Cuba. It was an honor.

Kritchevsky, Evelyn Sholtes	Bryn Mawr	PA
Soliday, Elke Matijevich	Richardson	TX
Hardister, John Paul Jr.	Concord	NC
Earle, Timothy Keese	Winnetka	IL
Earle, Eliza Howe	Winnetka	IL
Jett, George	Waldorf	MD
Brewer, Gwen	Waldorf	MD
Clegg, Eileen	Columbia	MD
Derven, Peter	Durango	CO
Derven, Ellen	Durango	CO
Johnson, David Lloyd	Cassopolis	MI
Sarah Boucas-Neto		PA
Weintraub, Rona	Mill Valley	CA
Burkhart, Kathleen	Miami	FL

The Staff

This April's staff included Dr. William Suarez, Paleontologist/ornithologist from the Havana Natural History Museum, Michael J. Good, MS, ornithologist and USA trip leader , Raydali Perez

O"Fairill , Havanatour Cuban Cultural Guide and our Havanatour driver Joel Cabrera. We were joined by birding guides Caesar Suarez in San Diego do los Banos, Frank Medina in Playa Larga and Paulino Delgado in Cayo Coco.

April 5, 2011 Wednesday Arrival day: Miami to Havana

The trip started out with a very easy flight from Miami Airport to Havana. We arrived and passed through customs with only slight delays. Here we met our Cuban guide Ms. Raydali Perez O'Fairill and our bus driver Joel. We gathered our gear and made our way to the Hotel Nacional in Havana and the first stop on our journey.

The group jumped right into the birding at Hotel National where we encountered Cuban Blackbirds, our first of many Cuban endemics. By the end of the first day we racked up a good list of birds including Cuban Martins, Red-legged Thrush, Helmeted Guineafowl, Common ground Dove and seabirds. A total of 26 species for the first afternoon (see the list below)

Figure 1 Red-legged Thrush Cuban Blackbird

DAY 1 April 6, 2011 Wednesday Orlando Garrido and Habana Vieja

Figure 2 Orlando Garrido and his collection of Cuban Endemic Birds and Mammals

We started the morning off with Orlando Garrido, author of "The Birds of Cuba". This part of the trip is great because participants are able to see almost all of the endemic birds which we will show them on the trip. They also have the opportunity to talk to the author and have him sign their book. Of course, Orlando gives an excellent overview of the many unique birds they

will see in the field but he also brings the birds to life through an overview of habitat, where we will see them in Cuba and some history into each bird's life. It is a wonderful time for me as the US guide, because I have an opportunity to reconnect with Orlando and reminisce about our trips together and talk to him about his current studies and work he is writing. He is Cuba's most prolific natural history writer and a wonderful man.

Orientation in Havana and lunch at café Taberna with music in Old Havana is an excellent way to start any trip in Cuba and an introduction to the culture of Havana. Here we walked the streets of Old Havana seeing for the first time the old city buildings, the gated and walled city, the El Morro fortress, built between 1589 to 1630 as defense from pirates those many centuries ago. The old Havana architecture, in varying states of repair, offers for the first time, a glimpse into the past of this amazing historic place. The participants loved their first day here. The lunch and music gave them firsthand knowledge about how the people of Havana live and work each day. The day was finished back at Hotel Nacional with dinner and an evening sitting on the veranda looking over the Atlantic Ocean. During the day you will see Caspian, Royal and Sandwich Terns cruising by along the Malecon' with the thousands of old and new vintage cars. The Ford 58 Mercury below is a slightly older model than one I drove in High School.

Figure 3 Old cars take you back to the 50's and another century

Day 2 April 7, 2011 Thursday Havana to San Diego de los Banos

After an evenings rest, everyone gathered for the famous breakfast at the Hotel Nacional. Many a celebrity has eaten here and enjoyed its amenities. Food seems to flow from the kitchen with fruits, meats, and an assortment of vegetable dishes that satisfies the palate of everyone. This is a travel day and the first day in the field. Most people are chomping at the bit to get to our first destination and begin the work of formulating a list of birds. More importantly, there is a strong desire to see every bird Cuba has to offer, so there is great anticipation. This leg of the journey takes us from the confines of Havana to the open fields of San Diego de los Banos. Along the way we see 5 Snail Kites, Smooth-billed Ani, Red-tailed Hawks, Osprey, Gray Kingbirds and a variety other species. Even though it is a long trip seeing birds and the landscape of the Pinar Del Rio region of Cuba delights everyone.

Our first road trip ends at the Hotel Mirador in San Diego de los Banos, home to the hot baths that have made this place famous. We meet our local guide and friend, Caesar Suarez, who will

lead us through the next two days. After dropping off our luggage, we are ready to head out into the field by 10:45. The morning sun is already warm; especially for us white folk from Maine! Caesar has developed excellent birding skills and is our eyes and ears when we visit some of the unique places in this region over the next two days. The first place we go is to a field outside of the village where there are Cuban and Yellow-faced Grassquit, Giant Kingbird, and nesting West-Indian and Cuban Green Woodpecker. We also have a chance to see Cuban, Orchard and Baltimore Oriole and our first good look at a Red-legged Honeycreeper and American Redstart. At about 12:15 we have to pull ourselves out of the field and head back to the hotel for Lunch. It should be pointed out that this is a place where we had a few ticks and it is also known for having a chigger or two. We checked into the Hotel Mirador followed by a quick lunch where we ticked off Cuban Emerald, Cuban Oriole, nesting Antillean Palm Swifts and Red-legged Honeycreeper. We located a Gray Kingbird nest and enjoyed lunch at the same time.

The afternoon birding took us to Cueva Portales to look for and listen to the amazing ventriloquist, the Cuban Solitaire. Found among the tropical "karstic" forest of the mogotes, these limestone mounds are one of the best places to regularly find Cuban Solitaire. Three birds were found allowing everyone to understand why this is Cuba's best singer! The walls of the cave reverberate the fluty Solitaire call throughout the famous location where Ernesto "Che" Guevara helped oversee the Missile crisis in 1961. One can imagine a quiet morning here with Che 'and his men sitting by the river's edge talking about the future of Cuba. They would have been familiar with the Knight Anole we saw on a tree and the myriad of calls coming from the thick Karstic forest around them. Our team had a chance to see Yellow-headed Warblers, Cuban Tody, Cuban Trogon, Black-whiskered Vireo, and Cuban Bullfinch. We also saw 2 Scaley-naped Pigeons which were probably food for Che's men during the long siege. We also had excellent views in the scope of Giant Kingbird and the beautiful Cuban Green Woodpecker. In total for the day we had 59 species and an amazing introduction to the birds of Pinar Del Rio.

Figure 4 Knight Anole and Cuban Trogon at Cueva Portales Cuba April 7, 2011

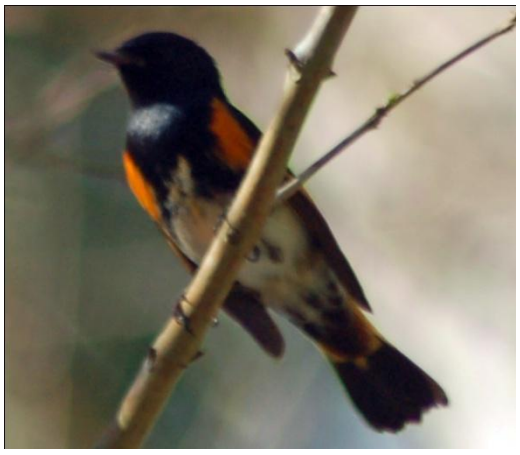

Figure 5 American Restart male Yellow-faced Grassquit April 7, 2011

Day 3 April 8, 2011 Hacienda Cottina, La Guira National Park to Playa Larga

The first thing we did in the morning was to take a little walk behind San Diego de los Banos to find Olive-capped Warblers which we did in some Pine Trees. We also found LaSagra's Flycatchers, Cuban

Vireo, Cuban Tody and Cuban Pewee. After a short stay we moved on to Hacienda Cottina and La Guira National Park.

Figure 6 **Cuban Tody** **Yellow-headed Warbler San Diego de los Banos**

La Guira is always incredible and this year was no different for target birds for this part of the trip. Shiny Cowbirds, Cuban Blackbirds and Tawny-shouldered Blackbirds were all found as we exited the bus to start the morning at Hacienda Cottina. The sun was warming already and the birding was about to get hot! We found a Red-tailed Hawk roosting in a tree across the valley and a total of 3 Broad-winged Hawk gave us a great show over the pond, while a Reddish Egret looked on cautiously. On the pond we found Least Grebe, a new Cuba bird for me. While we were looking around, Caesar came up to me and asks to put a bird in the scope. We talked briefly about what we thought it was, and then walked up the hill to find our first Stygian Owl, an immature bird sleeping in a tree. Caesar was so excited and everyone came quietly running to see another target species.

Figure 7 **Reddish Egret** **Broad-winged Hawk** **Immature Stygian Owl sleeping during the day**

During these dry days many birds come to the pond and stream that are part of the La Guira Park. We also found Tri-colored, Little Blue and Green Heron. Purple Gallinule and Common Moorhen we also present. Many Cuban Trogon, West Indian Woodpecker, Western Spindalis were seen as well as the white phase American Kestrel. These lands once belong to a former large landowner from the Batista era and the opulence is found everywhere. After a successful morning of birding we ate lunch, then said

our goodbyes to Caesar and made the 3 ½ hour drive to Playa Larga. We stopped by a reservoir along the way and did have a good collection of 175 Ruddy Duck, 6 Lesser Scaup, 39 Great Egret and an assortment of other water birds. 73 species was not bad for a travel day!

Just as we were about to enter the hotel Playa Larga we found my first ever "lucistic" Turkey Vulture. I apologize for the photo which was taken through the window. Happy to be out of the bus and near the ocean, we checked into the hotel and took a few minutes to relax before dinner. To my surprise 2 Cuban Parrots flew directly over my room so I took off with Sarah and Elke in tow and were treated to a great show and a few photos of this iconic Cuban bird. During our evening bird list we were joined by Frank Medina, our local guide, and the director of the Zapata national Park. Frank is an old friend of the Cuba Bird Survey and has been instrumental in making this program the best in Cuba. I thank him for his friendship and his excellent ornithology skills and love working with him!

Figure 8 **Lucistic Turkey Vulture (one in 2406 TV's)** **Cuban Parrot at Playa Larga Hotel**

Day 4 April 9, 2011 Playa Larga, Bermejas and Bahia de Cochinos

A 5:30 am breakfast started this day so that we could find all our Bermejas target birds. The sun was rising orange and blue and the first birds we see are the Cuban Parakeet. These happy and boisterous birds landed in a tall tree and gave everyone an opportunity to see and hear them waking up in the morning. Thus started our day of Cuban endemics at Bermejas and great views of many local specialty birds. These included Fernandina's Flicker, 4 Quail Dove, Blue-headed, Ruddy, Gray-fronted and Key-

West, in 2 hours! Bare-legged Owl, Cuban Pygmy Owl and of course the Bee Hummingbird.

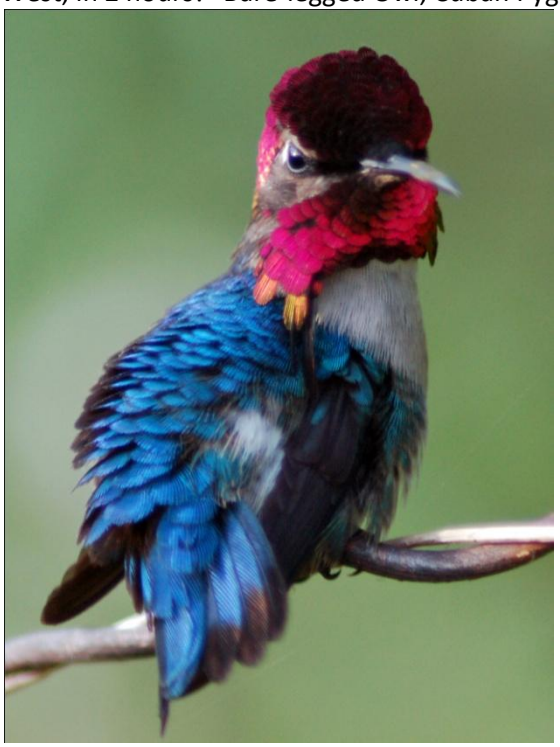

Figure 9 Bee Hummingbird

Fernandina's Flicker

Figure 10 Cuban Parakeet Cuban Pygmy Owl

The Bee Hummingbird was the star attraction especially for Sarah who almost fainted at the sight and size of this diminutive bird. We all spent some time enjoying the antics of the smallest bird in the world. I have some concerns about the fact that the hedge where this little guy use to sit last year has been removed, thus habitat has been changed, and I worry that these subtle changes are the very thing that will lead to the loss of this species in the future. I know one hedge does not sound like a lot but in a

country where there is already fragmentation and serious habitat loss, I would hope that some education could help spar some this unique and locally rare species. I worry about my little amigo and hope that there is a future for any of the unique species that we have seen.

Also seen were 11 species of Warblers including **Prothonotary** which several members of the group saw. We heard and saw nine Great Lizard Cuckoo's got good looks at nesting Fernandina's Flicker. Many Tody and Trogon were seen and heard adding to the excitement of walking in this forest

We spent siesta at Caleta Buena an excellent all inclusive restaurant and a place to snorkel, bump your head after a few Mojito's and genuinely have some fun! The snorkeling was excellent and it was a great pleasure to jump into the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea. A startling number of fish and sea creatures live here and it was excellent diving and getting a closer look at the "birds of the sea". After too much fun!! we then drove to Soplliar to see a nesting Cuban Nightjar....the only way to describe this is incredible! What an amazing way to end our day with 69 species, many endemics and a feeling a success by the birding team!

Figure 11 Cuban Nightjar nesting in Soplliar, Cuba April 9, 2011

Day 5 April 10, 2011 La Turba and La Salinas Refuge

The target species for La Turba are simple… finding them is another story! As with most of my trips, I never worry about seeing the target birds but I do worry about having my clients walk away happy and satisfied. And so it was to be in La Turba and the most important birds of the day, The Zapata Sparrow and Zapata Wren. One of the first birds out of the bus was another target species, Red-shouldered Blackbird. This bird was first described as a separate species by John Gundlach in 1850 with clear evidence supporting species status in 1992 with a paper in the **Auk** by Whittinham, Kirkconnell and Radcliffe, who delineated the differences in song and in sexual dimorphism. It was Garrido and Kirkconnell that proposed species status for Red-shouldered Blackbird by noting that in contrast to all Red-winged Blackbirds of North America which are polygamous, Red-shouldered Blackbirds appear to be monogamous and that both male and female members of each pair sing (i.e. duetting, usually

associated with monogamy). The last important paper I will mention is 2008 Auk paper by Baker, Vandergon and Lanyon entitled "Species Status of the Red-Shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius assimilis). This is worth reading if you're interested in understanding this group of birds.

Our next target birds were the Zapata Sparrow and Zapata Wren. The Zapata sparrow responded nicely by showing everyone its yellow breast and belly, white throat and stripped malar region. There are three races of Zapata Sparrow and we will see two before our trip is over. The Zapata Wren took much longer to locate for every member of our group! This is never an easy bird and today was no different. We did locate 5 individuals but making sure that all members of our group had sufficient observations of this unique and important species, that took some time. The wait was worth it as we did eventually have a fabulous look at this finely barred and white bellied bird. The males were singing to beat the band when we first found them but quieted down and thus began the cat and mouse game until finally we were able to phish it the male and female over for some good looks in the scope. Everyone was happy including the Wrens as we departed La Turba with our full complement of target species we were after. Celebrations in the bus and we are back to Playa Larga for Lunch and siesta. Siesta for me included a little swim in the historic Bay of Pigs and a fortunate collaboration with a couple of German volleyball players in a competitive game of Volleyball!! Next to birds, sciences, my kids and wife Lori, volleyball ranks up there with the most important things in life!!

Figure 12 **La Turba specialty bird Zapata Sparrow** **Red Shouldered Blackbird**

La Salinas is a world of its own and so unique that it is difficult to describe. Red and Black Mangrove are highly specialized to live in conditions imposed by high salinity and excess humidity. These plants and the animals that live among them are adapted to the flooding conditions. This is why they have a long-shank prop or pneumatephore roots that supply oxygen to the plant when flooded. The forest is initially 5-20 meters high as you travel the 21 km to La Salinas. Mangrove is the only kind of terrestrial vegetation that makes direct contact with the sea. It is home to a variety of crustaceans including shrimp and lobster. Mangrove is important for birds as they host a variety of fish, especially for the numerous Herons and water birds that use this region during winter. Flamingo sieve the water with their unique bills for brine shrimp and can be found by the 1000's during the winter months before they head north

to their nesting islands. The Zapata is the largest wetland in the West Indies and a place of great importance to migratory birds.

This day our group headed out at 4 pm for the ride down to la Salinas. Along the way we stopped at the many towers placed so that you can see over the vegetation into the numerous lagoons that dot the region. Large flocks of Flamingo, many Herons of the Ardeidae family are present including Great Blue, Great, Snowy, Little Blue, Reddish and Tri-colored. We got excellent looks at 3 Cuban Black Hawk and Clapper Rail thanks to the great eyes of William Suarez. **At the end of the day we had seen a total of 81 species, many endemics and a lifetime of memories.** By far the best day of the trip.

Figure 13 Cuban Black Hawk **Clapper Rail (Rallus longirostris)**

Figure 14 Cuban Iguana La Salinas

Day 6 April 11, 2011 Travel day Playa Larga to Camaguey

If I never see another Turkey Vulture again I will not be sad! We counted 537 on the transect to Camaguey and for the whole trip we counted over 2406!! Where do they all go and what are they eating? , seemed to be asked quite often as we traveled around the country. Because they can sore effortlessly they save energy. A healthy adult turkey vultures weighs approximately 5 to 6 pounds. One thing I find interesting about TV's is that they do not have a voice box and thus have limited vocalization capabilities. They can only utter hisses and grunts. They usually hiss when they feel threatened, (just before they vomit on you!!) Grunts are commonly heard from hungry young and adults in courtship. The turkey vulture, contrary to popular belief, does not feed strictly on carrion (though carrion forms the bulk of its calories). This species has been recorded eating a wide variety of food, including wild and domestic carrion, stranded mussels, shrimp, grasshoppers, mayflies washed onto shore, rotten pumpkins, palm fruit, grapes, juniper berries, and feces of coyote and sea lion. This explains a lot about their personality. Of all the TV's we saw in Cuba we only saw one Lucistic bird which says something about how rare the bird was that we saw in Playa Larga.

The best birds we saw on the 600 plus km trip were the 2 White-collared Swift in the Santa Clara mountains and the 2 Gundlach's Hawk that Tim and I saw at the rest stop. We thought these may be the last of the trip but we knew better!! Several good Warblers were seen at Los Hoya where we ate lunch including Black-throated Blue, Cape May and American Redstart. A total of **38 species** is what we had for today's trip but many great memories of the country side and the people that make up the interior of Cuba. Camaguey province is Cuba's largest and most thinly populated. It is relentlessly flat and its vast plains are punctuated by occasional rusty windmills, barns and water towers. This is cattle country, evidenced by the 339 Cattle Egret we saw along the way, and the cowboys or "vaqueros" on horseback. Camaguey grew from the profits of the sugar and cattle industry and offers us respite for a handful of important Cuban endemics.

Figure 15 Gundlach's Hawk silhouette Turkey Vultures

Day 7 April 12, 2011 Camaguey and Najasa

The city of Camaguey is vibrant with a rich historical and architectural heritage. The Hotel Colon offers a place of peace and serenity when compared to the hustle of the city. Bicycles, horse and buggy and trains are memories everyone takes home with them as well as a few important birds. Driving about 60 km to the outskirts of the city we found our way to Najasa. Here we easily found 12 Palm Crow, 21 Cuban Crow, and Plain Pigeon, nesting Fenandina's Flicker, Great Lizard Cuckoo and excellent looks at Limpkin. After a leisurely walk we drove to **Le Belen** where we had an excellent afternoon with a local guide.

This horse stable in the middle of nowhere has acres of forested land and open fields perfect for seeing Giant, Gray and Loggerhead Kingbird, nesting La Sagra's Flycatchers and Caracara. Here we were also treated to more Cuban Parakeet and we were able to get the scope on a pair of Plain Pigeon and Eastern Meadowlark to round out the afternoon. It was quite hot when were there but that did not dampen the spirits of this group of birders. Finally we gave in to the heat and headed back to the city for a relaxing evening and a fine dinner at the Hotel Colon. When we got back to town some of us took a long stroll through the historic city and also visited a few communities outside of the city central. I did see one caged Bullfinch in Camaguey I wanted to free it from its cage but was stopped by a suggestion.

54 species was the total for this day and everyone was ready to make the short trip to Cayo Coco in the morning. Haste Luego

Figure 16 Cuban Crow (The laughing Crow) Cuban Bullfinch

Day 8 April 13, 2011 Camagüey to Cayo Coco

Cayo Coco is separated from the mainland of Cuba by the Bahía de Perros (Bay of Dogs) The only way across is to fly, as we did in 2010, or drive across a 17 km long causeway that has become an environmental concern for the regional government. When first designed there were no openings to the flowing sea and the inner waters began to suffer as coral died and ecological systems collapsed.

A result of these mistakes another causeway has been designed with the Sea in mind and this one is currently being open to the ebb of the tide. The causeway offers travelers an opportunity to observe the life of a shallow Caribbean Sea. Here we get close views of Red-breasted Mergansers, the soaring Magnificent Frigetbird (Fregata magnificens 112 total) and hundreds of American Flamingo. Caspian, Royal and Sandwich Terns, fish along here and many Herons of the Ardeidae family. Living Life in a Cuban lagoon.. These diverse landscapes offer winter refuge for the **81 species we saw** in the northern cays plus many others birds that stopover during fall and spring migration, like our **White-collared Swift** we saw earlier in the week. Both South and North American migrants utilizes Cuba, this important Siesta in the Sea.

With over 15 miles of beaches giving away to the world's second largest coral reef, it's no wonder that holidays to Cayo Coco in Cuba attract their fair share of beach and dive enthusiasts from around the world. For our group, the northern Cays offer the possibility to understand more deeply how migration to Maine or North Carolina is related to these northern islands. As you now understand from a trip with us that each uniquely adapted species can be found on an equally unique Island. The loss of any habitat like Cayo Paredon Grande would mean the end of an endemic species or race. The best examples are my favorite Thick-billed Vireo and the endemic **subspecies Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata varionai)**. We found both species with the help of Paulino and were happy to have captured some digital moments.

The afternoon trip was spent looking for the Bahama Mockingbirds (3), which graced us with a display of contempt and curiosity but feeling relaxed enough to regurgitate several seeds. We than stopped by an active Lagoon where we were treated to 215 Black-necked Stilts, Roseate Spoonbills, many Dowitcher, Lesser Yellowlegs and White Ibis. Tucked in among these was the real prize for the day, four West Indian Whistling Ducks, preening and relaxing in the late afternoon sun.

Figure 17 Bahama Mockingbird West Indian Woodpecker

Day 9 April 14, 2011 Coyo Coco, Paredon Grande and Romano

We were about to enter the world of Paulino Delgado, our local birding guide in Cayo Coco. Our first birds of 89 seen in Cayo Coco are my favorite for this region, **Zapata Sparrow** on Paredon Grande and Thick-billed Vireo. With less yellow, the almost gray Cayo Coco race of the Zapata Sparrow is easily identified and differences seen under cool morning light; less yellow on the belly and under tail coverts for starters. The low bush and Mangrove forests, dry as a bone during our April trip, will be mosquito infested in a few short weeks producing ample insects for the eight **Thick-billed Vireo** and six **Zapata Sparrow** we saw during our trip. Habitat for this population of Thick-billed Vireo is threatened from irreversible damage of future land development. The northern Cays need reservation status to protect the many rare avian gems of Cuba that call these islands their home.

Oriente Warblers abound on this April 14 morning, as did **Cuban Green Woodpecker, Cuban and Black-whiskered Vireo and Cuban Bullfinch** were everywhere with 55 recorded for the

day. Each day on Cayo Coco revealed new species of interest for our group. Healthy flocks of Roseate Spoonbill were found typically mixed with a myriad of migratory waterfowl. Reddish Egret was often seen in their white form as were Little Blue and the Great White, which we had and fortuitously had an opportunity to compare with a nearby black legged Great Egret.

Gundlach's Hawk habitat was our next destination. We hustled back into the bus keeping our eyes open for **Cuban Black Hawk** (8) and Caracara along the way. This coastal shrub and Royal Palm tree forest offers nesting habitat for this Coopers Hawk relative, as well as, Cuban Gnatcatcher, West Indian Woodpecker, Cuban Pewee, and Cuban Vireo and nesting Cuban Emerald. Each member of our group had very close vies of all of these birds and both William and I were happy with the progression through the cays. The only thing we had to do was wait for another moment n the trip for the Gundlach's Hawk. At the end of the **day we <u>had seen 89 species</u>** indicating the importance of the time we spend on and around Cayo Coco. I want to thank Paulino and William for helping set a trip species record for one day.

Figure 18 **Oriente Warbler** **Yellow Warbler**

Figure 19 Zapata Sparrow Thick-billed Vireo Cayo Paredon Grande

Figure 20 Cuban Gnatcatcher Emerald Hummingbird on a nest

Day 10 April 15, 2011 Cayo Coco Morning and Drive to Santa Clara

There was a sense of relief for everyone on the trip because we had seen all of our Cayo Coco target birds and had excellent opportunities to study in detail most of the species unique to this place. Our first stop by the shoreline produced Sanderlings, Semipalmated and Wilson's Plovers and Ruddy Turnstones probing the white sands for insects. The goal for this day was to check out some of the local hotspot lagoons and enjoy our last morning in Cayo Coco. We got some great views of Cuban Gnatcatcher, Cuban Vireo, Oriente Warblers and West Indian and Cuban Green Woodpecker as we walked into an isolated lagoon. Here we found Merlin, Roseate Spoonbills, Little Blue, Reddish and Great Blue Heron and our first good look at a female American Avocet. By the end of the morning everyone was ready to make the 3 hour drive to Santa Clara and begin the final leg of our journey through Cuba.

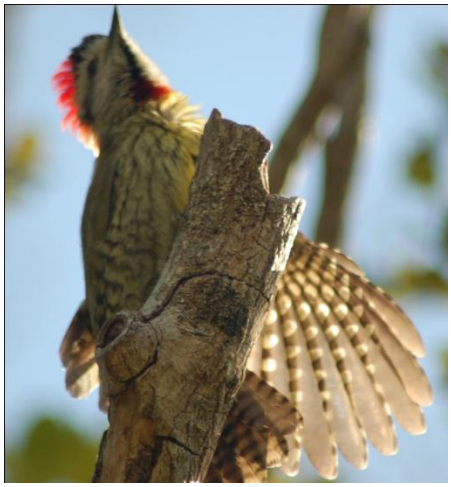

Figure 21 Cuban Green Woodpecker Anhinga

Day 11 April 16, 2011 Santa Clara and drive to Havana

Santa Clara was a pivotal point in the journey because we had not yet had an opportunity for everyone to see the Gundlach's Hawk. William had one trick up his sleeve and that was a nesting Gundlach's Hawk which we held in secrecy and told everyone about when we arrived at Hotel Los Caneyes on the outskirts of Santa Clara. After a leisurely drive from Cayo Coco we entered the capital of the province and the burial grounds for Che' Guevara. After being killed by the CIA in 1967 Che was made a citizen of Cuba and his body along with 38 of his closest men were all entombed at this national shrine in the city where the revolutionaries defeated the Batista army and ousted the dictator.

William told everyone to meet in front of the hotel where we than set off to locate the Gundlach's nest. After a brief time, Gwen was the first to see the nest and report to William. We than placed the scopes on it and found at least one chick in the nest and hope for the future of this difficult to find Raptor. This bird closed the final chapter of the Birds of Cuba and everyone went home feeling satisfied with our final bird list. !66 species seen and 10, 208 individual birds observed. April 16 marked 50 years since the victory at the Bay of Pigs and our group's final full day in the field. Each of us marked our own birding successes and failures; my being that I did not focus on the Gundlach's Hawk on the morning of the 16th and will have to use George Jett's images for the final report! George, by the way, has some excellent shots of this bird flying in the sun, so it was a triumph for our group that we saw Gundlach's Hawk and a trip with many successes.

Figure 22 Gundlach's Hawk Santa Clara Cuba Northern Waterthrush

Havana April 16, 2011 On top of Havana

The final drive home was a welcomed relief for this travel weary group. We had come to Cuba wondering if the rip would be a success and at the end everyone knew that we had surpassed their expectations making it “one of the best trips they had ever experienced”. I was impressed by the work that all of the staff and guides put into this trip and it also passed my personal expectations. I came back home from this trip feeling satisfied that we had shown everyone all of the birds that we came for in Cuba. I would only have changed on thing. Make the trip longer!! Viva Cuba and viva the Birds of Cuba!

All Photos were taken by Michael J. Good, MS info@downeastnaturetours.com even the out of focus ones!! (dammit)

Location: Havana Hotel National

Observation date: 4/6/11

Notes: First day of a 12 day trip to Cuba. Much of the day was spent talking with Orlando Garrido and walking in Old Havana

Number of species: 26

Helmeted Guineafowl 7
Magnificent Frigatebird 4
Double-crested Cormorant 3
Brown Pelican 25
Cattle Egret 1
Black Vulture 1
Turkey Vulture 90
Broad-winged Hawk 1
Laughing Gull 35
Herring Gull 25
Caspian Tern 2
Royal Tern 12
Sandwich Tern 8
Rock Pigeon 50
Eurasian Collared-Dove 30
Mourning Dove 20
Common Ground-Dove 8
Antillean Palm-Swift 5
Gray Kingbird 8
Cuban Martin 3
Red-legged Thrush 6
Northern Mockingbird 28
Palm Warbler 1
American Redstart 1
Cuban Blackbird 18
Greater Antillean Grackle 1
House Sparrow 45

Location: San Diego de los Banos April 7-8 2011

Observation date: 4/7/11

Caribbean Conservation Trust April 5-17, 2011 Cuba Bird Survey

Notes: These data are the final count for day 1 of our Cuba field trip. Birds of note are Cuban Grassquit, a threaten species due to the Cage Bird Trade. The weather was perfect for birding giving us a good start for the trip. Nice example of Orioles and the first Orchard outside of San Diego de los Banos for Caesar.
Number of species: 59

Helmeted Guineafowl 6
Brown Pelican 11
Great Blue Heron 1
Great Egret 26
Snowy Egret 5
Little Blue Heron 13
Cattle Egret 155
Turkey Vulture 330
Osprey 4
Red-tailed Hawk 1
American Kestrel 4
Merlin 1
Killdeer 1
Black-necked Stilt 2
Rock Pigeon 17
Scaly-naped Pigeon 3
White-winged Dove 2
Mourning Dove 15
Common Ground-Dove 10
Smooth-billed Ani 19
Barn Owl 1
Antillean Nighthawk 8
Antillean Palm-Swift 23
Cuban Emerald 5
Cuban Trogon 3
Cuban Tody 3
West Indian Woodpecker 4
Cuban Green Woodpecker 2
Cuban Pewee 2
La Sagra's Flycatcher 1
Gray Kingbird 30
Loggerhead Kingbird 5

Giant Kingbird 2
Black-whiskered Vireo 12
Cuban Martin 6
Barn Swallow 7
Cave Swallow 6
Cuban Solitaire 5
Red-legged Thrush 13
Gray Catbird 2
Northern Mockingbird 28
Palm Warbler 5
Black-and-white Warbler 1
Ovenbird 1
Yellow-headed Warbler 7
Western Spindalis 3
Red-legged Honeycreeper 2
Cuban Bullfinch 5
Cuban Grassquit 6
Yellow-faced Grassquit 8
Rose-breasted Grosbeak 1
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 9
Eastern Meadowlark 2
Cuban Blackbird 16
Greater Antillean Grackle 26
Cuban Oriole 3
Orchard Oriole 3
Baltimore Oriole 1
House Sparrow 50

Location: San Diego de los Banos April 7-8 2011

Observation date: 4/8/11
Notes: This is the last day in San Diego at the Hacienda Cottina for birding on the grounds where many of these birds were seen and recorded. We than drove to Playa Larga and Zapata Swamp to begin the next part of the journey through Cuba
Number of species: 73

Lesser Scaup 6
Ruddy Duck 175
Least Grebe 2
Pied-billed Grebe 2

Neotropic Cormorant 1
Double-crested Cormorant 2
Brown Pelican 15
Great Blue Heron 7
Great Egret 39
Snowy Egret 1
Little Blue Heron 4
Reddish Egret 1
Tricolored Heron 1
Cattle Egret 142
Green Heron 3
White Ibis 6
Turkey Vulture 363
Osprey 4
Snail Kite 4
Broad-winged Hawk 3
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Crested Caracara 8
Purple Gallinule 1
Common Moorhen 4
American Coot 59
Killdeer 5
Black-necked Stilt 6
Lesser Yellowlegs 1
Laughing Gull 22
Rock Pigeon 3
White-crowned Pigeon 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove 2
White-winged Dove 1
Mourning Dove 13
Common Ground-Dove 7
Cuban Parrot 2
Great Lizard-Cuckoo 1
Smooth-billed Ani 8
Stygian Owl 1
Antillean Palm-Swift 30
Cuban Emerald 5
Cuban Trogon 12

Cuban Tody 10
Belted Kingfisher 1
West Indian Woodpecker 10
Cuban Green Woodpecker 7
Cuban Pewee 7
LaSagra's Flycatcher 2
Gray Kingbird 37
Loggerhead Kingbird 12
Cuban Vireo 3
Black-whiskered Vireo 20
Cuban Martin 10
Tree Swallow 3
Barn Swallow 2
Cave Swallow 15
Red-legged Thrush 19
Gray Catbird 1
Northern Mockingbird 15
Tennessee Warbler 1
Olive-capped Warbler 6
Palm Warbler 1
Ovenbird 1
Yellow-headed Warbler 12
Western Spindalis 3
Red-legged Honeycreeper 3
Cuban Bullfinch 1
Yellow-faced Grassquit 6
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 23
Cuban Blackbird 29
Greater Antillean Grackle 41
Shiny Cowbird 29
Cuban Oriole 1
House Sparrow 50

Location: Playa Larga/Bermejas April 9, 2011

Observation date: 4/9/11

Notes: This day we started early at Bermejas catching good looks at Cuban Parakeet, Parrots, Bee Hummingbird, many Warblers, all 4 Quail Dove and many others. We spent siesta at Caleta Buena an excellent place to snorkel, bump your head after a few Mojito's and genuinely have

some fun! We then drove to Soplliar to see a nesting Cuban Nightjar....incredible way to finish up a great day. I have never been this close to any goatsucker unless it was a study skin.

Number of species: 69

Tricolored Heron 1
Cattle Egret 50
White Ibis 3
Turkey Vulture 100
Broad-winged Hawk 3
American Kestrel 1
Killdeer 3
Willet 1
Ruddy Turnstone 2
Caspian Tern 1
Royal Tern 1
White-crowned Pigeon 5
White-winged Dove 2
Zenaida Dove 5
Mourning Dove 9
Common Ground-Dove 4
Key West Quail-Dove 1
Gray-fronted Quail-Dove 2
Ruddy Quail-Dove 1
Blue-headed Quail-Dove 2
Cuban Parakeet 15
Cuban Parrot 5
Great Lizard-Cuckoo 9
Smooth-billed Ani 5
Bare-legged Owl 1
Cuban Pygmy-Owl 1
Stygian Owl 1
Greater Antillean Nightjar 1
Antillean Palm-Swift 7
Bee Hummingbird 2
Cuban Emerald 3
Cuban Trogon 21
Cuban Tody 9

West Indian Woodpecker 7
Cuban Green Woodpecker 2
Northern Flicker 1
Fernandina's Flicker 5
Cuban Pewee 3
La Sagra's Flycatcher 2
Gray Kingbird 9
Loggerhead Kingbird 2
Cuban Vireo 4
Black-whiskered Vireo 15
Cuban Crow 1
Cave Swallow 12
Red-legged Thrush 12
Gray Catbird 3
Northern Mockingbird 17
Northern Parula 7
Magnolia Warbler 2
Black-throated Blue Warbler 3
Black-throated Green Warbler 6
Prairie Warbler 1
Palm Warbler 1
Black-and-white Warbler 2
American Redstart 5
Prothonotary Warbler 1
Ovenbird 4
Common Yellowthroat 1
Yellow-headed Warbler 17
Western Spindalis 2
Cuban Bullfinch 1
Yellow-faced Grassquit 4
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 15
Cuban Blackbird 15
Greater Antillean Grackle 24
Shiny Cowbird 10
Cuban Oriole 3
House Sparrow 10

Location: La Turba and La Salinas April 10, 2011

Observation date: 4/10/11
Notes: Early visit to La Turba and after noon visit to Las Salinas on April 10, 2011
Number of species: 81

Pied-billed Grebe 1
American Flamingo 231
Magnificent Frigatebird 4
Neotropic Cormorant 33
Double-crested Cormorant 1
American White Pelican 4
Brown Pelican 3
Great Blue Heron 4
Great Egret 4
Snowy Egret 3
Little Blue Heron 13
Tricolored Heron 12
Reddish Egret 18
Cattle Egret 58
Green Heron 3
Black-crowned Night-Heron 9
White Ibis 60
Roseate Spoonbill 1
Turkey Vulture 125
Osprey 2
Cuban Black-Hawk 5
American Kestrel 2
Peregrine Falcon 1
Clapper Rail 3
Sora 2
Purple Gallinule 6
Common Moorhen 6
American Coot 2
Black-bellied Plover 12
Killdeer 7
Black-necked Stilt 19
Spotted Sandpiper 3
Greater Yellowlegs 23

Willet 9
Lesser Yellowlegs 6
Least Sandpiper 7
Caspian Tern 6
Royal Tern 2
Rock Pigeon 2
White-winged Dove 5
Mourning Dove 23
Common Ground-Dove 6
Great Lizard-Cuckoo 3
Cuban Pygmy-Owl 2
Antillean Nighthawk 2
Antillean Palm-Swift 8
Cuban Emerald 13
Belted Kingfisher 4
West Indian Woodpecker 14
Cuban Green Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 2
Cuban Pewee 4
La Sagra's Flycatcher 7
Gray Kingbird 7
Loggerhead Kingbird 5
Black-whiskered Vireo 3
Cuban Crow 2
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 8
Cuban Martin 12
Tree Swallow 25
Barn Swallow 30
Cave Swallow 7
Zapata Wren 5
Red-legged Thrush 7
Northern Mockingbird 14
Northern Parula 2
Yellow Warbler 14
Black-throated Blue Warbler 2
Black-and-white Warbler 1
American Redstart 7
Northern Waterthrush 2

Common Yellowthroat 9
Yellow-headed Warbler 4
Yellow-faced Grassquit 7
Zapata Sparrow 1
Red-shouldered Blackbird 10
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 18
Cuban Blackbird 7
Greater Antillean Grackle 30
Shiny Cowbird 4
House Sparrow 15

Location: Playa Larga to Camaguey April 11, 2011

Observation date: 4/11/11

Notes: The drive from Playa Larga to the central city of Camaguey is an experience unlike any other in the world. Farmland, tobacco, vegetable and wildlife, domesticated and wild, abound. The life style changes almost as drastically as the countryside until you make it to the inter-sanctum of the pirate proof city of Camaguey. Now you have entered the heart of the Cuban Island and the soul of the Cuban people. In Camaguey, life is dictated by the weather and the heat is at times nearly unbearable. Where there is water there is abundant avian life. Magical in its simplicity. Simply Bueno

Number of species: 38

Anhinga 2 2 Swimming and diving about 150 km from Playa Larga
Great Egret 7 Seen at several close locations like ponds and low wetlands. One was seen at the edge of a dry watershed
Little Blue Heron 23
Cattle Egret 339 This is an indication of the number of land mammals utilizing the land along the road. Habitat use in these regions is dedicated to raising mammals and great focus has to be placed on preserving and growing the biodiversity. Extreme care should be given to somehow adding to the biodiversity of FORESTS and GROVES of native trees and plants. Especially forest understory habitats with the canopy maintained above. Bring back some of the ancient stratification of a variety of forest types along the way to Camaguey. Biodiversity on Cuba must be enhanced or species will disappear from the face of the earth.
Turkey Vulture 537 Many kettles of TV included some other Raptors and could vary from 1 to 95. One important instance was First, Tim than Tim and I sighted 2 Gundlach's Hawk on the southern side of the highway at the edge of the Santa Clara Mountains. Clear images of long rounded tails and with rounded wings and head jutting beyond the wings. The size was easily

discernible by the numerous Turkey Vulture circling nearby. The circling
Osprey 1 There were not many Osprey, somewhat indicating that the majority have migrated. There are plenty of fish in the North Gulf of Maine if we protect the resource
Gundlach's Hawk 2 This was an important bird at the moment because we had, to that point, failed to find one. Tim had picked them up first and I was wondering around counting birds so I was also ready to find them... as soon as he pointed I caught them in my bin's. Finally! Clear images and most likely a mating display as the aerial dance was slow and undulating through the clear blue sky they drifted down and out of sight before others could locate them.
Red-tailed Hawk 4 Mixed in with TV's but easily seen and a wonderful change!
Crested Caracara 7 Many sitting in trees with occasional flights seen.
American Kestrel 7
Merlin 1
Killdeer 1
Rock Pigeon 69
White-winged Dove 2
Mourning Dove 28
Common Ground-Dove 1
Smooth-billed Ani 4
White-collared Swift 2 White-collared Swift, Streptoprocne zonaris, Another really important bird as it is a resident bird in Mexico's central region, the Greater Antilles to Trinidad and South to Peru. William and I each got one as we entered the central mountains of the Santa Clara range. At first I thought it was a small Merlin
Antillean Palm-Swift 5

Cuban Emerald 2
Cuban Tody 1
West Indian Woodpecker 3
Gray Kingbird 11
Black-whiskered Vireo 2
Cuban Martin 5
Tree Swallow 52
Barn Swallow 1
Cave Swallow 195 There were flocks of ranging from 15 to 70 individuals adults and immature. Mostly around bridges and water, a few smaller flocks were seen migrating through the countryside.
Red-legged Thrush 2
Northern Mockingbird 6
Cape May Warbler 1 One female was found at one of the stops. Some warblers were

always found, like humans, where there was a stream or some other water source in little Islands in a sea of farmland and cultivation.
Black-throated Blue Warbler 3
American Redstart 1
Yellow-faced Grassquit 3
Eastern Meadowlark 3
Cuban Blackbird 2
Greater Antillean Grackle 14
House Sparrow 71

Location: Najasa and Camaguey April 12, 2011
Observation date: 4/12/11
Notes: A warm to hot day with a touch of humidity, this day proved very warm for some members of the group seeking shelter from the sun in the shade of a tree. Just like Latino woman, the birds of this region are dynamic and haunting in their life styles and manners. The Avian diversity in this region recapitulates the many colors of the Cuban people.
Number of species: 54

Helmeted Guineafowl 4
Great Egret 4
Cattle Egret 69
Green Heron 2
Black-crowned Night-Heron 3
Turkey Vulture 145
Osprey 1
Crested Caracara 1
American Kestrel 9
Merlin 1
Purple Gallinule 1
Limpkin 4 These birds were foraging in very dry mixed shrub and grass pasture land habitat. They were also seen in La Belen foraging in the shade of large deciduous trees and Royal Palm
Killdeer 1
Northern Jacana 4 2 adults and 2 immature birds were seen in different locations foraging in a very small wetland habitats that were left at the end of the dry season
Rock Pigeon 33
Plain Pigeon 7 Plain Pigeon (Columbia inornata) was a target bird for this region. Seeing 7 does not make me feel secure that there is sufficient habitat for this species.

White-winged Dove 1
Mourning Dove 18
Common Ground-Dove 6
Cuban Parakeet 15 This region is home to Cuban Parakeet (Aratinga euops)
Cuban Parrot 8 Cuban parrot(Amazona leucocephala) At home in the lush forest of the horse rearing region of Cuba, Cuban parrot are a sight for sore eyes in an otherwise hat and dry environment. The colors give hope of the impending wet season.
Great Lizard-Cuckoo 5 One of my favorite calls of Cuba tying us to the past Vast forests of Cuba. These ancient forests must be reconstituted throughout Cuba. Biodiversity must be maintained.
Smooth-billed Ani 45
Cuban Pygmy-Owl 1 This bird was calling for us from the tress.
Antillean Palm-Swift 3
Cuban Emerald 2
Cuban Trogon 2
Cuban Tody 2
West Indian Woodpecker 11
Cuban Green Woodpecker 1
Fernandina's Flicker 4 Photos of Fernandina's Flicker at a nest site. Another species of serious concern as these cavity nesters demand a forest and Royal Palm for their future survival.
Cuban Pewee 2
La Sagra's Flycatcher 2
Gray Kingbird 6
Loggerhead Kingbird 2
Giant Kingbird 5 Giant Kingbird (Tyrannus cubensis) another important species for the La Belen region. Excellent images and photos were taken of these birds in relation to the cohabitating species, Gray Kingbird.
Cuban Vireo 1 Williams Bird!!
Black-whiskered Vireo 3
Palm Crow 18 Palm Crow (Corvus palmarum)
Cuban Crow 21 Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) One of my favorite Corvid calls.
Cuban Martin 10
Northern Mockingbird 23
Northern Parula 1
Black-throated Blue Warbler 3
American Redstart 1
Common Yellowthroat 2

Cuban Bullfinch 1
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 12
Eastern Meadowlark 23 Numbers are much higher during the fall migratory period. These were almost assuredly (Stunella magna hippocrepis) the future endemic Cuban Meadowlark.
Cuban Blackbird 2
Greater Antillean Grackle 5
Shiny Cowbird 1 Shiny Cowbird (Molothrus bonariensis)
William is great at spotting these grayish brown females. Much easier when mixed with males
Cuban Oriole 2
House Sparrow 25

Location: Cayo Coco April 13, 2011

Observation date: 4/13/11
Notes: A quick trip to Cayo Coco from Camagüey allowed us to bird away the afternoon on Cayo Guillermo and Coco. You cannot go wrong when there are Flamingo, Ibis and other tropical wonders flying about. These cays MUST BE PROTECTED AND HABITAT MAINTAINED AT ALL COSTS. Hotel development and future planning must take into account the fragility and uniqueness of the northern archipelago.
Number of species: 81

West Indian Whistling-Duck 4 The "Cuba libre" bird was a wonderful find foraging in a Cayo Coco drying lagoon. West Indian Whistling Duck (Dendrocygna arborea) sticks out like a sore thumb from its sheer size but its habitat is shrinking and its status in question.
Mallard 4
Lesser Scaup 2
Red-breasted Merganser 23 Coming across the causeway these were commonly seen and a northern nesting and migratory bird
Helmeted Guineafowl 2
American Flamingo 525 Many had already left the region for nesting grounds north. This creature is a wonder in flight. OMG evolution and tenacity have evolved a pink wonder... my favorite color
Magnificent Frigatebird 25 Sitting on the wind; these birds defy gravity with impunity and grace. I am in awe every time I see them.
Double-crested Cormorant 14
Brown Pelican 2
Great Blue Heron 5
Great Egret 5

Snowy Egret 2
Little Blue Heron 3
Tricolored Heron 7
Reddish Egret 6
Cattle Egret 357
White Ibis 9
Roseate Spoonbill 4
Turkey Vulture 181
Osprey 1
Cuban Black-Hawk 1
Broad-winged Hawk 1
Crested Caracara 5
American Kestrel 6
Merlin 2
Clapper Rail 2 Photos of this bird are excellent and thanks to William for spotting tone bird form the bus and stopping with a lurch we nailed this bird after some gentle nudging. Walking on water is a trick of pedological design!
Common Moorhen 7
Killdeer 5
Black-necked Stilt 215 WOW... lots of these classical birds... never to many and never enough I love the Black and white combination of plumage like a Bal.
Spotted Sandpiper 2
Willet 8
Lesser Yellowlegs 10
Ruddy Turnstone 4
Least Sandpiper 18
Short-billed Dowitcher 80
Laughing Gull 75
Herring Gull 10
Great Black-backed Gull 1 Tim picked this one up as we drove across the causeway. Was it a Kelp Gull?
Royal Tern 4
Rock Pigeon 41
Eurasian Collared-Dove 6
White-winged Dove 1
Mourning Dove 39
Common Ground-Dove 5
Smooth-billed Ani 29

Antillean Palm-Swift 7
Cuban Emerald 5
West Indian Woodpecker 4
Northern Flicker 3
La Sagra's Flycatcher 3
Gray Kingbird 9
Loggerhead Kingbird 1
Cuban Vireo 1
Black-whiskered Vireo 2
Barn Swallow 7
Cave Swallow 45
Cuban Gnatcatcher 5
Red-legged Thrush 1
Gray Catbird 1
Northern Mockingbird 14
Bahama Mockingbird 3 Bahama Mockingbird(Mimus gundlachi) A very close encounter with an adult bird is an indication of the curiosity displayed by members of the Mimidae family. This bird gave us an opportunity to see how it regurgitates the fruit digested seeds of local plants, spitting them out while inspecting our group.
Northern Parula 1
Yellow Warbler 6
Cape May Warbler 3
Black-throated Blue Warbler 2
Yellow-rumped Warbler 7
Black-throated Green Warbler 1
Black-and-white Warbler 1
American Redstart 4
Northern Waterthrush 1
Common Yellowthroat 5
Western Spindalis 8
Cuban Bullfinch 5
Yellow-faced Grassquit 3
Indigo Bunting 1
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird 10
Eastern Meadowlark 4
Cuban Blackbird 6
Greater Antillean Grackle 25

Cuban Oriole 1
House Sparrow 40

Location: Cayo Paredon Grande and Ramano April 14/15, 2011

Observation date: 4/14-15 /11
Notes: Northern migrating species like Warblers were here in much higher numbers indicating how important these northern cays are as stopover sights for migratory nontropical migrants. Before another large resort is built there must be much pre-development planning on the part of the Cuban Government. In the day of Hemingway, these cays were undisturbed refuges for migratory birds. Biodiversity on these northern cays is crucial. A greater diversity of birds than most parts of Cuba!
Number of species: 89

West Indian Whistling-Duck 6 When you find six WIWD there is no doubt that you are having a fine birding day. Where else but the local sewage pond along with many other and varied species
American Widgeon 3 Yes these were good birds and the male is spectacular!
Blue-winged Teal 5
Northern Shoveler 26 Male and female are both comical and sublime. One of my favorite members of the Anatinae family.
Magnificent Frigatebird 15
Double-crested Cormorant 42
Brown Pelican 1
Great Blue Heron 2
Great Egret 1
Tricolored Heron 3
Reddish Egret 7
Cattle Egret 5
Green Heron 3
White Ibis 13
Roseate Spoonbill 49
Turkey Vulture 45
Osprey 1
Cuban Black-Hawk 8
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Crested Caracara 4
American Kestrel 3
Merlin 1
Common Moorhen 17

American Coot 20
Killdeer 20
Black-necked Stilt 21
Spotted Sandpiper 6
Solitary Sandpiper 4
Lesser Yellowlegs 2
Ruddy Turnstone 9
Least Sandpiper 3
Laughing Gull 20
Herring Gull 1
Royal Tern 13
Rock Pigeon 1
White-crowned Pigeon 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove 5
White-winged Dove 11
Zenaida Dove 6
Mourning Dove 12
Common Ground-Dove 8
Great Lizard-Cuckoo 1 Saurothera merlini santamaria is slightly duller and smaller than the main land race. Paulino was able to captivate this bird and several good photos were taken.
Smooth-billed Ani 12
Chuck-will's-widow 1 Heard calling at Sol Cayo Coco
Antillean Palm-Swift 1
Cuban Emerald 13
Cuban Tody 2
Belted Kingfisher 2
West Indian Woodpecker 5
Cuban Green Woodpecker 8
Northern Flicker 1
Cuban Pewee 2
La Sagra's Flycatcher 10
Gray Kingbird 12
Loggerhead Kingbird 9
Thick-billed Vireo 8 (Vireo crassirostris) is threatened by development of it's very narrow habitat range. If the Cuban government does not protect Cayo Paredon Grande this bird could be lost forever. A bird at great risk and in need of habitat protection...!
Cuban Vireo 3
Black-whiskered Vireo 4

Cuban Martin 3
Barn Swallow 1
Cave Swallow 25
Cuban Gnatcatcher 7
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 This bird was seen by experienced US field assistance who immediately recognized the significance of the bird. On migration, Ruby-crowned Kinglets are locally rare during migration and need more study and observations to better understand its status n Cuba.
Red-legged Thrush 6
Gray Catbird 5
Northern Mockingbird 28
Northern Parula 2
Yellow Warbler 7
Cape May Warbler 15
Black-throated Blue Warbler 6
Yellow-rumped Warbler 8
Prairie Warbler 2
Palm Warbler 1
American Redstart 4
Ovenbird 3
Northern Waterthrush 3
Common Yellowthroat 1
Oriente Warbler 12
Bananaquit 1
Western Spindalis 29
Cuban Bullfinch 55
Yellow-faced Grassquit 7
Zapata Sparrow 6
Summer Tanager 3
Indigo Bunting 1 Heard and very briefly seen in the understory story.
Painted Bunting 1 Seen outside by a field assistant familiar with this species. Good sighting
Greater Antillean Grackle 29
Cuban Oriole 2
House Sparrow 10

Location: Santa Clara to Havana April 16, 2011

Observation date: 4/16/11

Notes: The end of a great trip and a short ride to Havana leaves ample time to refresh after a long drive and enjoy the surrounding amenities of Havana. The energy on the Malecon' is contagious and goes from dusk to dawn on a typical Saturday night. But this was not a typical night as it was the April 16 celebration of the victory of the Bay of Pigs invasion. People wander down to the water's edge on the Malecon' just like the land crabs of Playa Larga who are taking care not to be crushed under human transportation in their attempt to propagate their culture. I am brought back to some moments in the bus when I was seeing little to no traffic on the autopista, and wondering about the thatched roof huts, homes and barns that we collected as visual memories. People's faces, little boys with their dads, old cars racing down the street barely remembered…. but a sign of another era. William knew them all and was as fascinated by the cars as the Cuban Vireo that gave him the sight of Birds that tie us so closely together. Personally, I am fascinated by the intensity and vitality of Cuba. It was a great trip and I am already thinking about the next birding trip to Cuba.

Number of species: 11
Great Egret 1
Cattle Egret 86
Greater Antillean Nightjar 1
Antillean Palm-Swift 3
Gray Kingbird 1
Cuban Vireo 1
Cave Swallow 9
Eastern Meadowlark 1
Cuban Blackbird 10
Greater Antillean Grackle 12
House Sparrow 60