Caribbean Conservation Trust

CUBA BIRD SURVEY ***Itinerary 2014***

Cuba's Western Mountains, Zapata Swamp,

and Northern Archipelago

December 1-13, 2014

Halifax River Audubon

Bare-legged Owl (Otus lawrencii) Bermejas, Cuba Michael J. Good, MS

Caribbean Conservation Trust

CUBA BIRD SURVEY

Cuba's Western Mountains, Zapata Swamp and Northern Archipelago

December 1-13, 2014

Cuban Pygmy Owl (Glaucidium siju) Guanahacabibes

Halifax River Audubon

Trip Summary: December 1-13, 2014

Compiled, written and photos by Michael J. Good, MS (info@downeastnaturetours.com)

A record total of 175 species of birds were seen during the first two weeks in December. Our group tallied 16,015 individual birds including 24 endemics, and 2 future endemic species (Cuban Meadowlark, Giant Kingbird). Sixty-five locations were surveyed and we explored and traveled over 1300 miles of Cuban countryside in our search for deeper understanding of Cuban ornithology. The Halifax River Audubon group had excellent observation skills in the field which contributed to our trip total and the discovery of a new Cuban national record, AMERICAN PIPIT (Anthus rubescens) in Guanahacabibes National Park. Our birding guide Osmani was so excited and that alone made the trip worthwhile. During this initial encounter, David Hartgrove uttered the now infamous words…"I have one word for you….Bee Hummingbird". It was time to move on for another Cuban endemic. We eventually returned to find and better photograph American Pipit because I knew at El Verraco that Anthus rubescens would be one of the prodigious birds besides Bee Hummingbird encountered during our trip. An article is being drafted for submission to the Journal of Caribbean Ornithology.

American Pipit (Anthrus rubescens)

30 November, 2014 Miami, Florida

The members of the Halifax River Audubon gathered at the Sleep Inn prior to our Cuba departure. That evening we met with trip organizer Gary Markowski to discuss details of the following day's events and the anticipated flight to Havana.

1 December, 2014 Miami to Havana, Cuba

The first of several early mornings, the HRA group caught a 7:15 shuttle over to Miami Airport. Gary and Michael took passports and documents to the Marazul desk where they are processed in preparation for our Cuba flight. Everything went smoothly: we passed through customs, settled in for our flight and arrived safely at José Marti Havana Airport.

After landing in Jose Marti Airport we meet Gustavo our historical guide and Ernesto Tamarit, our driver. We cleared customs we made our way to exchange U.S. dollars for CUCs as the first order of business. We departed the airport by Havanatur bus, getting our initial impressions of Cuban culture and people. Driving through Havana we encountered the transportation system including horse and buggy, antique cars, trucks, a few Camels and a way of life very different from Miami, Florida. Before checking in at Hotel Habana Paseo, we visited the revered Ornithologist and author Sr. Orlando Garrido for a two-hour discussion about anticipated endemic species, their habitats and locations and their unique plumage and behaviors. Orlando also told anecdotal stories about Ornithologist James Bond, Orlando's tennis years and a few personal stories about each of the endemics described before signing copies of our field guides. The group encountered our first warblers in Orlando's backyard, an American Redstart male and Palm Warbler along with our first Cuban Emerald. We were also introduced to a menagerie of animals including a caged Cuban Parrot, Hutia and a variety of other creatures. On our way to Hotel Habana Paseo we passed through historic Miramar, Vedado and historic Havana communities. The first Cuban birding took place on Paseo Street with four American Redstarts, three Northern Parula, Red-legged Thrush and our first endemic, two Cuban Blackbirds.

2 December, 2014 Havana to Guanahacabibes Peninsula Maria la Gorda

After a leisurely breakfast, Dr. Giraldo Alayon joined the group for an 8 am departure for the Guanahacabibes Peninsula and Hotel Maria la Gorda. Traveling in our Havanatur bus we had our first impressions of the famous Malecon where we found Laughing Gull, 15 Antillean Palm Swift, and many of the common species like Eurasian Collard Dove, more Cuban Blackbirds, a Little Blue Heron and the ubiquitous Cattle Egrets.

After a 1½ hour drive west we stop for our first Cuban bird survey at La Chorrera Campismo where our trip's fortuitous luck began. After stepping out of the bus, tour leader Michael Good saw our first target species, Cuban Grassquit (7) as soon as we arrived. On a walk through the camp we encountered many

species including Cuban Tody, Trogon, two male Cuban Vireo, Bullfinch and Green Woodpecker. We encountered our first dark-eyed immature White-eyed Vireo and several warblers. We found a total of twenty-one species during our first stop, giving the group confidence in the goals of our survey.

At our lunch stop at Los Barrigonas**,** Kenn Gunn discovered a Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Kirstin Snyder photographed our trip's only Shiny Cowbirds, and the group spotted many Antillean Palm swifts dashing about as well as a Red-tailed Hawk, for a total of thirteen species and one excellent sighting by Kenn.

The four-hour drive from Havana ended in the Gulf of Mexico birding paradise on Cabo Corrientes. Along the way, a fortuitous stop for gas near San Luis gave us an indication of migration on the western peninsula when we found Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, ten Black-necked Stilts, one Solitary Sandpiper, five Least Sandpipers and our first excellent observations of an immature and adult Snail Kite. We added Merlin, Gundlach's Hawk, Cuban Eastern Meadowlark and several warblers as we made our way along the Carretera Central de Cuba. Nearing the Guanahacabibes Peninsula a Northern Jacana was seen in a wetland. This brought our total for our first two days to 69 species.

Our destination, Hotel Maria la Gorda on the Guanahacabibes Peninsula, is home to Guanahacabibes National Park, a 150,000 acre home to 213 species of birds, 70 species of spiders, several mammals, 12 reptiles, 3 species of frogs and 15 endemic plants. The age of the peninsula is between 1-15 million years old, arising during the Pleistocene era and about the same age as the Zapata Swamp.

3 December, 2014 Cabo Corrientes, Maria la Gorda to La Bajada

We arrived last night in the dark at Hotel Maria la Gorda. A Cuban Pygmy Owl was heard that night and in the early morning. Birding at Maria la Gorda added White-crowned and three Plain Pigeon, the dawn song of Loggerhead Kingbird, Great Lizard Cuckoo and a wonderful show of flying Butterfly Bats before we traveled to La Bajada along the coastal road to officially start our day. Before we reached la Bajada Ranger Station, we had added twenty-three species including Cuban Black Hawk, Great-Lizard Cuckoo, Merlin and West Indian Woodpecker.

Our first full day in the field produced an unexpected avian record when **American Pipit (Anthus rubescens)** was discovered at El Verraco by the Caribbean Conservation Trust, Halifax River Audubon (HRA) Cuba trip. (**N 21.55095,W 84.37462)** We stopped for a few minutes to count birds when Joan Becker, an HRA participant, saw a larger sparrow-like bird walking through the drying lagoon eating flies and other insects. The bird was determined to be an American Pipit by trip leaders Giraldo Alayon and Michael Good, who is familiar with this nesting species on Mount Katahdin and the coastlines of Maine, USA. **White-crowned Sparrow**, another rare species, was seen by the observant crew from the bus later that morning.

We left this Cuban record bird to pursue endemics after some prodding by David Hartgrove. Along the way we encountered three Belted Kingfisher, a migratory American Kestrel, and a Merlin and Green Heron. The top target bird of the day, Bee Hummingbird produced four good sightings including close-ups of a female just beyond El Verraco, foraging on Ponece flowers. Our walk along the road produced 30 Tricolored Munia, Cuban Bullfinch, 23 endemic Yellow-headed Warblers and a few Western Spindalis.

After a walk in the woods looking for Cuban Pygmy Owl we located a migratory Eastern Pewee which we photographed. We ventured back to El Verraco where American Pipit was relocated and documented. White-crowned Sparrow was added to the list along with Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, and a few White Ibis.

The group surveyed Maria la Gorda during the afternoon, finding Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Worm-eating Warbler. Fern Murphy added a rare Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The afternoon survey at Estacion Ecologica along the park entrance road included two Cuban Pygmy Owls, some excellent scoped and photographed views of White-crowned Pigeon, seven species of east coast Warblers, our first Tree Swallows, La Sagra's Flycatcher and Loggerhead Kingbird. Coming back to Maria la Gorda Hotel someone in the bus yelled out that there was a Cuban Black Hawk roosting in an Uva tree. Two rare birds and many endemics made this day memorable with 87 species by last light and our first organized bird list of the trip.

4 December, 2014 Maria la Gorda to San Diego de los Banos

Our morning field trip visited the Camino de Hoyo de Palmar Sendero and the Lagoon south of La Bajada. Many excellent forest birds were added along the Sendero including four Gray Catbird, seven species of Warbler, including our second Worm-eating. We returned early because it was a little quiet overall. The lagoon was a different story with one Purple Gallinule, an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron, one Lesser Scaup, four Northern Shovelers, a Spotted Sandpiper, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and our first Northern Waterthrush of the trip. We traveled back to Maria la Gorda for lunch, packed our bags and departed for San Diego de los Banos via the Carretera Central de Cuba. We added two Anhinga swimming in fresh water ponds, six American Kestrels (5 white and one red Morph), a couple of Kingfisher and many Cattle Egret (500+).

Upon our arrival to Hacienda Cortina we met local guide Caesar Suarez for a late afternoon field trip looking for Giant Kingbird. On this attempt we failed but the survey was excellent at Hacienda Cortina despite it being under construction. The pond and stream were drained so no Least Grebe were present but a few waders could still be found including three Green Heron, and a covey of fifteen Northern Bobwhite (Colinus virginianus) which have not been previously counted at this location. HRA added 2 female Summer Tanager, 9 Tawny-shouldered Blackbirds (Agelaius humeralis), 25 Cuban Blackbirds (Dives atroviolaceus), and we also located a recently visiting flock of 15 Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca). By the time we returned to Hotel Mirador we had added 14 new species and amassed 101 species of birds for the trip.

5 December 2014 Che's Cave, Cueva de Portales and Hacienda Cortina

We were treated to a spectacular morning at Che's Cave with six Cuban Solitaire seen and heard, four West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris), one Yellow-throated Vireo (Vireo flavifrons) seen well, six Warblers and my first Pygmy Owl heard at this location. Butterfly and Fruit Bats were located inside the cave. We were treated to very brief observations of a soaring Gundlach's Hawk. Scaly-naped and Plain Pigeon were both found for a total of 35 species. On our return, Ernesto and Caesar

maneuvered the bus to Los Pinos where we found two Olive-capped Warblers and another soaring Red-tailed Hawk on a quick survey before travelling back for target species Giant Kingbird.

At Hacienda Cortina our survey included stream habitat where we found a Red-legged Honeycreeper female mixed in with eight species of Warblers. Six Cuban Trogons were found in the upland forest including three males courting a female. At that moment, after a great observation by David Hartgrove, two Giant Kingbirds were found. Thirty species of birds were seen here including a Baltimore Oriole flying through the canopy, Tennessee Warbler, one of ten species seen this morning. We depart San Diego de los Banos for the drive to Zapata with 108 species.

From 1:00 to 5:45 pm we traveled on the road to Zapata. We made one important stop at 6 VIAS Nina Bonita Reservoir for a 20-minute survey. Here we tallied 1700 Lesser Scaup, 45 Ruddy Ducks, 50 Pied-billed Grebe, Brown Pelican, 175 American Coot and 4 Double-crested Cormorants. No species were added to our list on the drive east. It was dark when we arrived at Hotel Playa Larga and the Zapata Cienaga.

6 December 2014 Bermejas Refugio de Fauna, Culeta Buena, San Blas, La Cuchilla

After a 5:30 breakfast with a 6:00 am departure we met Frank, our local guide for the next three days. On the ride to Bermejas we saw one Barn Owl flying from the road. At Bermejas Refugio de Fauna, the recently improved forest blind afforded an opportunity for close observations of four Blue-headed Quail and Zenaida Dove. Ruddy, Grey-headed and Key West Quail Dove were briefly seen. In the forest, one out of place Crested Caracara was observed by Giraldo and Gustavo possibly eating crabs. One Bare-legged Owl was coaxed out for great photos. Four Cuban Trogon, Cuban Tody, three Cuban Green Woodpecker were seen and one Northern Flicker was heard. Endemics included a male and female Bee Hummingbird in winter plumage darting among the flowers and 175 Cuban Parakeet. Also seen, four Ovenbird, Yellow-headed Warbler and three Gray Catbird. We searched San Blas for Fernandina's Flicker with no luck. At La Cuchilla we added Red-shouldered Blackbird, a Sora and got our best looks at two Crested Caracaras.

After a relaxing lunch and swim at Playa Giron's all-inclusive restaurant, Culeta Buena added Cave Swallows and five Prairie Warbler. After our Culeta siesta the group returned to Bermejas finding five Cuban Parrot and flocks of Cuban Parakeet moving about as the sun was setting. At dusk, we illuminated with our spotlight on the first flight of the evening for Cuban Nightjar, which danced closely between our group and then perched some distance away.

A long productive day ended with a bird list tallying 116 species.

7 December 2014 La Turba Zapata, La Boca Cocodrillo Farm, Tiki Resturante, and Las Salinas

Breakfast at 6:00 am and a 6:30 departure for La Turba with Frank. Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow were the target species for the morning. Both were found easily with excellent looks and photos of the female Zapata Wren for everyone in the group. We had an opportunity to witness 3500 Tree Swallows passing overhead and listen to the calls of Black Rail and Sora.

Our success at La Turba allowed us to depart early for a leisurely walk around La Boca Cocodrillo Farm. We located target species Fernandina's Flicker in the parking area calling loudly to the female nearby, followed by Cuban Oriole, Black-crowned Night Heron, Common Gallinule and Anhinga plus thirteen species of Warblers making this stop particularly exciting.

The group enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Tiki Resturante in Playa Larga from 12 to 1 pm. Here we added two female Red-breasted Merganser, one Neotropic Cormorant, an Osprey with a fish and an encounter with El Gato in the flowage from the Cienaga which took a few days to fully understand.

After siesta we drove the entire length of the Sendero Salina de Brito to Las Salinas where we experienced the bio-rich mangrove habitat of Cienaga de Zapata. An amazing list of water birds, terns and shorebirds were found including 70 American White Pelicans, a species whose numbers have increased during the last five years. 198 American Flamingos stood like Christmas ornaments, Roseate Spoonbill, multiple Egret and Heron, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon and Blue-winged Teal were the dominate ducks. Caspian and Royal Tern, 19 Tricolored Heron, 14 Reddish Egret and White Ibis were all seen. Both Northern Harrier and Cuban Blackhawk were found. At sunset we experienced more shorebirds than we could count, including Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Short-billed Dowitcher. The day ended with a colorful sunset.

Our time in Zapata added 40 species for an excellent total of 156 species.

A glorious Zapata Sunset MJGood

8 December 2014 Travel day to Cayo Coco and the Northern Archipelago

Travel days are always interesting because of the observations made along the way. Farm lands and rolling hills made this a scenic section to travel through on the way to Cayo Coco. Our stop for lunch at Rio Azul Palador produced the trip's only Louisiana Waterthrush and one Painted Bunting male.

After crossing the 17 km long causeway we began our birding on Cayo Coco and the "Jardines del Rey". This stretch of road through shallow ocean waters produced eight Red-breasted Merganser, Greater Flamingo, Magnificent Frigatebird, Laughing Gull, and Royal and Sandwich Terns before our first glimpses of the northern cays. Our first stop on Cayo Coco produced Cuban Bullfinch and target bird Oriente Warbler, plus a nice assemblage of shorebirds and our first of several "Great White" Heron and Crested Caracara. We made our way to Sol Cayo Coco Hotel and our first night in the northern Cays.

9 December 2014 Cayo Coco, Cayo Romano, Cayo Paradon Grande and Cayo Guillermo

An early morning coffee and box breakfast for a 6 am departure with local guide Paulino. The northern cays rounded out our Cuban experience and bird list with a few more Cuban Black Hawk, one Peregrine Falcon, target species Thick-billed Vireo, nine Oriente Warbler, five Cuban Gnatcatcher and one Tennessee Warbler on Cayo Paradon Grande before the rain fell. We moved quickly to Cayo Guillermo where we fortuitously found Bahama Mockingbird and long lingering observations of Mangrove Cuckoo.

Making our way back to Sol Cayo Coco we stopped at the Guillermo Lagoons where we located 20 West Indian Whistling Duck with 450 Blue-winged Teal, 4 Northern Shoveler, 6 Pied-billed Grebe, more American Flamingo, Roseate Spoonbill, 5 Clapper Rail and several shorebirds. An estimated 25 Northern Waterthrush were heard before the rains fell and we departed for lunch. After lunch we traveled a short distance to Las Coloradas Playa under threatening skies. We had about twenty minutes of birding before the rain and managed to find 2 Piping and 7 Black-bellied Plover mixed with 63 Ruddy Turnstone and 32 Sanderling. The rain ends day nine early with 12 new birds and a total of 168 species.

10 December 2014 Cayo Coco, Cueva del Jabali, Travel to Santa Clara and Hotel Los Caneyes

Another early morning 6:00 am departure with local guide Paulino for Cueva del Jabali. Here we locate four Key West Quail Dove at the water fountain. During our walk along the road we find White-eyed Vireo, several warblers including two Cape May and an Oriente Warbler. It took some time but we located six of the Cayo Coco race of Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata varonai). This race is similar in plumage to the Zapata race but the behavior of this subspecies helps set it apart as they spend a great deal of time on the ground foraging and less time in the trees like the Zapata race. Twenty-two species were found at this location.

Checkout at 12:00 for a 2:00 departure, the group has time for some birding around the Sol Cayo Coco Hotel grounds. We tally Brown Pelican, Common Ground Dove, four Cuban Emerald, including one very tame male at the front entrance, one female Northern Flicker, one Swainson's Thrush, four species of Warbler and a Cuban Oriole before leaving. Travel to Santa Clara and Hotel Los Caneyes was uneventful except for one White-fronted/Canada Goose which was spotted shortly before sunset. We added another Anhinga and a couple of American Kestrels before arriving in the dark at Hotel Caneyes in the city of Santa Clara.

11 December 2014 Santa Clara to Havana

Giraldo and I took the group around the hotel grounds. On the outskirts we located a couple of Gundlach's Hawks and many Neotropical migrants including 25 Indigo Bunting and many Warblers. The morning light had just broken when we began this walk. Everyone was excited to be in the field as we began to wind down our trip. We tallied 27 species including an Orange-crowned Warbler observed by Meret Wilson, 250 Antillean Palm Swifts, a Cuban Green Woodpecker, Loggerhead Kingbird and 4 Red-legged Thrush for our last official field trip. We depart for Havana at 8:35 am making our way to the Che' Guevara Memorial for twenty minutes.

A total of 22 species and 555 individual members of the Parulidae family were found during our twelve day survey including **Tennessee Warbler** (Oreothlypis peregrina), **Louisiana Waterthrush** (*Parkesia motacilla*), **Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*), **Worm-eating Warbler** (Helmitheros vermivorus) and a rare **Orange-crowned Warbler** (Vermivora celata). Common east coast migrants included daily records for **Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart and Cape May Warbler**. We easily located the endemic **Oriente, Yellow-headed and Olive-capped Warblers** each in its respective habitat. CCT data continues to clearly demonstrate that Cuba is vital to a myriad of migratory species and supports a large population of wintering Neotropical and eastern U.S. breeding birds and must be protected from modern day habitat destructive practices.

By the end of our journey 175 species of birds were tallied. Everyone left Cuba with a feeling a satisfaction and accomplishment.

Our Cuban Bird Survey program is coordinated under U.S. government authorization by the Caribbean Conservation Trust, which is based in Connecticut. Along with **Michael J. Good, MS**, our team also included **Dr. Giraldo Alayon,** Curator of Arachnida at Cuba's National Museum of Natural History, a bilingual Cuban tour guide, Gustavo and our driver, Ernesto. We were joined by regionally-located Cuban naturalists and birding guides: Osmani in Guanahacabibes, Caesar in San Diego de los Banos, Frank and Orlando in Playa Larga and Paulino in Cayo Coco. The team helped guide HRA through a variety of natural areas in Cuba, the Caribbean's largest and most ecologically diverse island nation.

Halifax River Audubon December 1-13, 2014 Cuban Bird Survey

Bee Hummingbird Bermejas
2010 Cuba MJGood

About this report:

The Cuba Bird Survey report covers each day of the program from December 1-13, 2014. Each section has a description of the location, some highlights or interesting facts followed by the Ebird list for the location surveyed and total birds seen. All birds found in Cuba have been entered into Ebird, a real-time, online checklist program launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society which provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. Each Ebird list is followed by a specific location marker (ex. CU-01) www.ebird.org

At the end of this report are 3 appendixes. The first is a summarization of our extensive bird list followed by (2) a map of Cuba indicating locations surveyed and finally (3) an outline for diplomatic relationships with Cuba outlined recently by the United States, and a story about Marabu as biofuel. This report was compiled, written and includes photography by Michael J. Good, MS (info@downeastnaturetours.com) Thank you to Gary Markowski and the Caribbean Conservation Trust for the opportunity to bird Cuba.

Western and Central Cuba

Cuba is an archipelago consisting of the island of Cuba, the Isla De La Juventud and 4195 other Cays and islets. The Island lies at the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico, 48 miles from Haiti, 87 miles from the Bahamas, 90 miles from Jamaica, 112 miles from Florida and 130 miles from Cancun. This strategic location places Cuba directly in the path of migratory Neotropical species making their way to Central and South America and the West Indies. Cuba is 42,827 square miles (110,922 square kilometers) and is the largest island in the Caribbean. It is 744 miles long with a population of 11 million people of Cuban, many of Spanish, African and Asian descent. More than 2 million people live in Havana, the Capital city. Our program allows participants to see the “real and wild Cuba” with walks in the countryside, forests and shorelines of this pelagic island. There are no poisonous plants or animals in Cuba. An amazing four percent of the world’s plant species are represented here; 6,370 plants species with 52% endemics. There are 284 designated protected areas accounting for 11% of Cuba’s total 11 million hectares. The climate is subtropical moderated by the trade winds, a wet season (May through October “estacion de las lluvias”) and dry season (November through April “estacion de la seca”). We experienced a couple of tropical rain downpours but basically there was no rain during the 13-day trip that interfered with our work.

Cuba’s Birds

According to BirdLife International, which has designated 28 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Cuba, “Over 370 bird species have been recorded in Cuba, including 30 which are endemic to the island and 29 considered globally threatened”. Due to its large land area and geographical position within the Caribbean, Cuba represents one of the most important countries for Neotropical migratory birds – both birds passing through on their way south (76 species) and those spending the winter on the island (86 species).

Our itinerary provides opportunities to see many of Cuba's endemic species and subspecies, as listed below. This trip also focuses on the many Neotropical migrant species that migrate south to Cuba in the fall (endemic and endemic subspecies in italics)

Bare-legged Owl, Cuban Oriole, Bee Hummingbird, Blue-headed Quail-Dove, Gray-fronted Quail-Dove, Cuban Black-Hawk, Cuban Blackbird, Cuban Grassquit, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Parrot, Cuban Pewee, Cuban Pygmy-Owl, Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Tody, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Vireo, Fernandina's Flicker, Giant Kingbird, Gundlach's Hawk, Cuban Meadowlark, Cuban Nightjar, Red-shouldered Blackbird, Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, Yellow-headed Warbler, Zapata Wren, Zapata Sparrow, Cuban Crow, Cuban Emerald, Cuban Bullfinch, Plain Pigeon.

Halifax River Audubon December 1-13, 2014

Participants: All participants were Americans from Florida with varying degrees of birding experience, and each had the patience and enthusiasm needed to travel and bird in Cuba for twelve days. The December 1-13, 2014 survey team was totally engaged and involved with the importance and focus of the survey. They were all gracious and understanding about the schedule of events for each day, the need to be prompt and the research goals of the Cuban Bird Survey. I enjoyed getting to know everyone and appreciated the opportunity to bird with the Halifax River Audubon in Cuba. Hasta Pronto!

Dr. Giraldo Alayon Birding amigo and trip leader

Halifax River Audubon

Cuba's Wild Western Peninsula, Western Mountains, Cieniga Zapata and the Birds of Cayo Coco.

Detailed Bird List for December 1-13, 2014

Orland Garrido's House, Dec 1 2014, Day 1 CU-03
Dec 1, 2014 2:30 PM - 4:15 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: Orlando Garrido, co-author of the *Birds of Cuba*, gave us his overview of the endemic species we would encounter on this trip. We picked up a few birds in his back yard and had an opportunity to see Hutias, a Cuban Parrot and a first glimpse of life in Cuba.
7 species

Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 2
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 5
Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) 1
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 1
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 1 Orlando said this one had just arrived recently
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1 has been coming to Orlando's backyard for a couple of years
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 25

Hotel Habana Paseo Dec 2, 2014 # 413 Day 2, CU-03
Dec 2, 2014 6:32 AM - 7:32 AM
Protocol: Traveling
4.0 mile(s)
Comments: This is our travel day to the western mountains so we had a short time to bird around the hotel then drove towards the coast as we made our way out of Havana.
14 species

Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 2
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 3
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 5
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 4 at the coast near the Malecon
Rock Pigeon (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 15
Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) 3
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 2
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 1
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 15
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 2
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 10
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 15

La Chorrera campismo Travel day Dec 2 2014 #414 Day 2, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.6 mile(s)
Comments: Dr Giraldo Alayon joined the Halifax River Audubon in Havana and now we made our first important stop for Cuban Grassquit and many other excellent birds for the first field day. Here we listened to and finally saw the Cuban Vireo, Cuban Trogon, and a host of excellent forest species. The first bird we found here was Cuban Grassquit. The group begins to gel as a birding unit and both Giraldo and I are happy with our first stop.
21 species

Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 3
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) 1
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 5
Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus) 2
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 3
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 2
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 4
White-eyed Vireo (White-eyed) (Vireo griseus [griseus Group]) 2 both immature bird showed dark eyes and made us all think about the details of plumage and behavior. Good comparisons to Cuban Vireo
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 1
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 2
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 4
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 3
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 2

Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 7
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 2
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 2
Cuban Grassquit (Tiaris canorus) 7 our fist important Cuban Endemic and threatened species due to the caged bird trade in Cuba
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1

Cuban Grassquit (Tiaris canorus)

Artemisa Province Travel west Dec 2 2014 Day 2, CU-02
Dec 2, 2014 9:13 AM - 9:58 AM
Protocol: Traveling
40.0 mile(s)
Comments: Our first encounter with Marabu, the invasive plant from Africa. Road Trip.
6 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 4
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 50
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 40
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 10
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 6

Los Barrigonas Dec 2 2014 Day 2, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 12:01 PM - 1:01 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.1 mile(s)
Comments: This was a lunch stop on our way to the western mountains and Guanahacabibes. Shiny Cowbird was added here from pictures of Kirsten Snyder. Also a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was seen clearly by Ken Gunn but not seen by others. 13 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 15
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 1
Purple Gallinule (Porphyrio martinicus) 2 at the pond
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 2
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 20
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (Tyrannus savana) 1 This bird was seen by participant Ken Gunn and he is writing up details for this report. No picture was taken; Dark bird with very long tail, dark head seen flying east over the field
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 5
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 4
Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) 1 heard
Shiny Cowbird (Molothrus bonariensis) 7 Shiny Cowbird was added here from pictures of Kirsten Snyder.
Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca) 9

Pinar del Rio Dec 2, 2014 Day 2, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM
Protocol: Traveling
15.0 mile(s)
Comments: These were some of the birds seen passing through this region of Cuba on our way west.
6 species

Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 150
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 4
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 5
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 4 3 white morph and 1 red morph seen along the highway
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 1

The San Luis Ditch Dec 2, 2014 Day 2 # 418, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 3:00 PM - 3:25 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.1 mile(s)
Comments: The San Luis Ditch was a stream running south at one of our stops for gas. Here we were surprised by the number of migratory species of shorebirds we found while waiting for the bus. Snail Kites were also photographed along with Least Sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and several Black-necked Stilts.
12 species

Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Snail Kite (Rostrhamus sociabilis) 2 - an adult male and

female slightly brownish

Snail Kite (Rostrbamus sociablis) San Luis Cuba Dec 2 2014

Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) 10
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 2
Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularius) 1
Solitary Sandpiper (Tringa solitaria) 1 white eye ring noted
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 3
Lesser Yellowlegs (Tringa flavipes) 2
Least Sandpiper (Calidris minutilla) 5 nice looks at immature and adults
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 3

Carretera Central de Cuba Sandino Dec 2, 2014 Day 2 travel,
Dec 2, 2014 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM
Protocol: Traveling
70.0 mile(s)
Comments: We are driving along the Carretera counting birds as we go when out pops a Gundlach's Hawk at 3:15 pm flying across the road directly in front of us. A large Accipiter with broad wings and head out in front of the elbows of the wing. Three Falconidae were seen on this leg of the trip.
14 species

Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 50
Northern Jacana (Jacana spinosa) 1 along the road in a wetland habitat
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 1
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 1
Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus) 1
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 6 one red morph and 5 white seen along this stretch of road.
Merlin (Falco columbarius) 1
Bahama Mockingbird (Mimus gundlachii) 5
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 1
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 1
Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 15
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 4

Maria la Gorda Dec 2, 2014 #419 Day 2, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 5:51 PM - 6:16 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: Caribbean Conservation Trust December 2 2014 we find ourselves in this little bit of heaven overlooking the Caribbean Sea. The sun is setting and it is just ideal. Some mosquitoes but otherwise wonderful to be here. The Guanahacabibes Peninsula is a fantastic place to bird. This is our first of three days here. The Guanahacabibes National Park is a UNESCO Heritage site and is totally phenomenal: 150, 000 acres of mangrove, pine and semi-deciduous forest. There are 15 endemic plants, 195 species of birds, 70 species of spiders, 12 reptiles and 3 frogs. The geology is about 1-15 million years old and is the same age as the Zapata Swamp.
8 species

Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 1
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 1
Ring-billed Gull (Larus delawarensis) 1
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 9 sitting on the pillars of an old dock out in the front of the establishment.
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 1
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 19
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 1

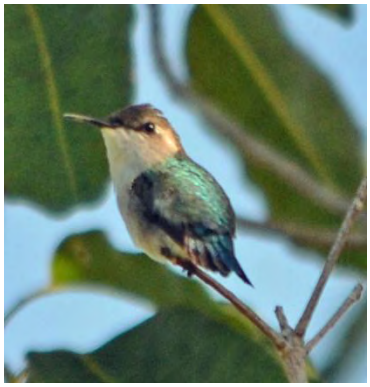
Cabo Corrientes, Maria la Gorda to La Bajada Dec 3 2014 Day 3, CU-01
Dec 2, 2014 6:45 AM - 8:05 AM
Protocol: Traveling
112.6 kilometer(s)
Comments: We started this list at Maria la Gorda and traveled to La Bajada along the coastal road. One Gundlach's Hawk was seen and other excellent birds along the shore. The road hugs the shoreline to La Bajada Ranger Station where we will pick up Osmani our guide.
23 species

Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 5
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1

Gundlach's Hawk (Accipiter gundlachi) 1 seen well by Ken Gunn
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 1
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 1
Plain Pigeon (Patagioenas inornata) 3
White-winged Dove (Zenaida asiatica) 2
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 6
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 2
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 15
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 3 along the shore road
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 3
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3 migratory birds for sure
Merlin (Falco columbarius) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 2 first bird of the day with a beautiful dawn song
White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 30
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 2
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 4 at Maria la Gorda
Cuban Oriole (Icterus melanopsis) 1

Zunzuncito Hotspot El Verraco Dec 3, 2014 Day 3 # 421, CU-01
Dec 3, 2014 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.3 kilometer(s)
Comments: Gustavo is birding with us today and getting better every year. This was an important stop for Bee Hummingbird, Zunzuncito, where we observed 4 females and perhaps a quick shot of a male which I will not report here because it was not verified or really seen well by the group or leaders. Ponece is the favorite food of Zunzuncito and there was also Amalia or Firebush at this location. The female bee was as curious about us as we were of it, making for some very close encounters.
26 species

Broad-winged Hawk (Buteo platypterus) 1
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 2
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 6
White-winged Dove (Zenaida asiatica) 1
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 3
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 3
Bee Hummingbird (Mellisuga helenae) 4 Our target bird for the morning. The wind had begun to blow in from the north, one of the reasons American Pipit was found.



Bee Hummingbird female (Mellisuga helenae) La Verraco

Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
Cuban Tody (Todus multicolor) 5
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 3
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 4
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1 white morph
Eastern Wood-Pewee (Contopus virens) 1 We were treated to a tired Eastern Wood Pewee who allowed us to photograph it in bright Cuban sunlight. This eastern U.S. common species of Tyrannidae is a migratory bird heading towards northern South America making an important stop on Cabo San Antonio to refuel and recalibrate before heading off on the northern winds currently blowing. This is the classic Cuban transient species

Eastern Wood Pewee (Contopus virens) Cabo San Antonio

La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 3
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 2
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 8

Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 4
Magnolia Warbler (Setophaga magnolia) 1 male seen well
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 2
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 3
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 2
Yellow-headed Warbler (Teretistris fernandinae) 5
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 9
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 2
Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca) 20 two flocks coming together as one

Cabo San Antonio, El Verraco Am. Pipit Dec 3 2014 Day 3, CU-01 N 21.55095,W 84.37462
Dec 3, 2014 9:00 AM - 9:20 AM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) was found this morning by the Caribbean Conservation Trust, Halifax River Audubon (HRA) Cuba trip at El Verraco, located on Cabo San Antonio, Guanahacabibes National Park when Joan Becker, an HRA participant, saw a large bird walking through a drying lagoon eating flies and other insects. The bird was determined to be an American Pipit by trip leader Michael Good and Giraldo Alayon. This is a record bird for Guanahacabibes National Park and a first record for the Country of Cuba. Through further observations it was determined to indeed be an American Pipit which photos have verified and can be found below.
24 species

Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 2
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 3
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 5
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 1
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 1
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 1
White-winged Dove (Zenaida asiatica) 1
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 3
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 1
American Kestrel (Northern) (Falco sparverius [sparverius Group]) 1
Merlin (Taiga) (Falco columbarius columbarius) 1
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 1
Red-legged Thrush (West Cuban) (Turdus plumbeus rubripes/coryi) 2
American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) 1 American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) was found this morning by the Caribbean Conservation Trust, Halifax River Audubon (FL) Cuba trip at El Verraco on Cabo San Antonio, Guanahacabibes National Park. Joan Becker, a member of our survey team, first spotted the bird. It was verified by trip leader Michael Good as an American Pipit with white outer tail feathers and the propensity to bob the tail up and down while feeding, buffy white supercillium, buffy white throat, black streaking on the chest, dark legs and walking through a drying lagoon eating flies and other insects. This is a record bird for Guanahacabibes National Park which has never been recorded for this location (number 213 according to our local guide Osmani Fernandez). This is also a first record for the country of Cuba which we will verify with Arturo Kirkconnell and Orland Garrido. Through further observations it was determined to indeed be an American Pipit. This bird was totally documented with photographs from every angle which will be recorded upon our return to the US.

Confirmed what I already knew with Orlando Garrido ...co-author of the Birds of Cuba, that AMERICAN PIPIT (Anthus rubescens) was a Cuban National Record...the first time anyone has reported this bird in CUBA. The weather patterns in North America prior to this date included a rather large cold front that had dropped into Florida. The occurrence of northern migrants must happen on a yearly basis on the Guanahacabibes Peninsula, but the number of qualified ornithologists birding in this region is extremely limited to opportunities like those offered through the Caribbean Conservation Trust. This bird will be reported to Journal of Caribbean Ornithology.

American Pipit (Anthrus rubescens) 9am Dec 3 2014 El Verraco Guanahacabibes National Park, Cuba

American Pipit (Anthrus rubescens) 9am Dec 3 2014 El Verraco Guanahacabibes National Park, Cuba

Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 5
White-crowned Sparrow (Zonotrichia leucophrys) 1 This bird was photographed and seen well by the entire group.

White-crowned Sparrow (Zonotrichia leucophyrys) El Verraco Cabo San Antonio Cuba Dec 3, 2014

White-crowned Sparrow (Zonotrichia leucophyrys) El Verraco Cabo San Antonio Cuba Dec 3, 2014

Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 15
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 6
Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca) 10 seen flying by the entire group

Maria la Gorda Dec 3, 2014 #419 Day 3, CU-01
Dec 3, 2014 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: Lunch and siesta time before going to the La Bajada Ranger station for a walk. These birds were recorded by a few people and verified by the trip leaders. The interesting bird is Ruby-crowned Kinglet which is a rare migrant which my groups have seen on previous field trips starting in December 8, 2002 (Craves and Hall, J. Caribbean Ornith., 16 No.1) Also found was Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Pheucticus ludovicianus) This bird was seen by Michael Good with photos showing an immature bird. This rare transient species was also seen on previous trips including 12 December 2002. I am not totally sure but it could be a young female.
18 species

Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 3
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Nyctanassa violacea) 1
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 1 Flyby and calling
Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularius) 1
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 2
Ring-billed Gull (Larus delawarensis) 1
Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) 1
Plain Pigeon (Patagioenas inornata) 3
White-winged Dove (Zenaida asiatica) 1
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 4
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (Regulus calendula) 1 This is a rare transient bird on Cuba and a great find by Fern Murphy. No pictures were taken. See also (Craves and hall J Carib. Ornith. 16 No. 1)
Worm-eating Warbler (Helmitheros vermivorum) 1

Worm-eating Warbler Kristin Snyder

Worm-eating Warbler Kirstin Snyder photo

American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 3
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Pheucticus ludovicianus) 1
Immature Maria La Gorda Cuba Dec 3 2015

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Pheucticus ludovicianus) Immature Maria La Gorda Cuba Dec 3 2015

Estacion Ecologica Guanahacabibes Dec 3, 2014 #423 Day 3, CU-01
Dec 3, 2014 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.2 kilometer(s)
Comments: This walk started at the Ranger Station and continued down the park entrance road until we were scurried off by the threat of a cold front and darkness. We had an opportunity to specialize on many birds including some fantastic looks at two Cuban Pygmy Owls.
24 species

Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 2
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 6

White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala)

Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 4
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 2

Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju)

Bee Hummingbird (Mellisuga helenae) 1
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 4
Cuban Tody (Todus multicolor) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3 north American

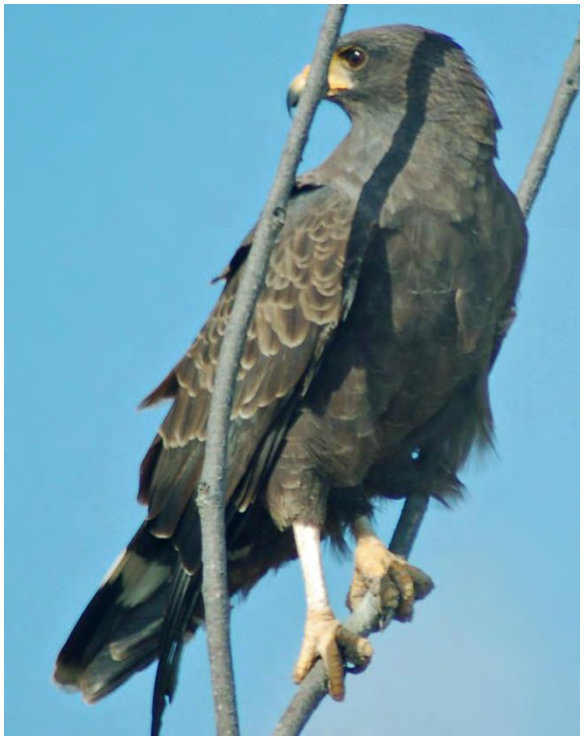
migrants

American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) migratory

Cuban Parrot (Amazona leucocephala) 2
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 4
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 3
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 1
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 1
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 7
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 3
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 5
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 5
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 18
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 3
Yellow-headed Warbler (Teretistris fernandinae) 18
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 5
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 2

Cabo Corrientes Cuban Black Hawk Dec 3 2014 Day 3,
Dec 3, 2014 5:35 PM - 5:50 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: Coming back to Maria la Gorda Hotel someone in the bus yelled out that there was a Cuban Black Hawk. Since we had not focused on one yet we stopped the bus, everyone got out and we were treated to a rare feeding event for this species. The Black Hawk was roosting in an Uva tree as we set up our scopes and cameras. Suddenly it dove to the beach catching a Crab. It proceeded to jump several times into the air piercing the crab with its sharp talons. It then began to eat the crab in front of the whole group showing us why it was called the Cuban Crab Hawk. After consuming part of the crab it flew off to a nearby tree to finish it dinner.
1 species

Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 1



Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii)

Estacion Ecologica Guanahacabibes Dec 4, 2014 #423 Day 4, CU-01
Dec 4, 2014 7:50 AM - 8:08 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.1 kilometer(s)
Comments: The group returned to pick up Osmani before heading off for a walk through a deciduous forest. These birds were seen at the Ranger Station
24 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 2
Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 1
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 2
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 1
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 1
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 1
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 3
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3
Cuban Parrot (Amazona leucocephala) 2
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 1
Tree Swallow (Tachycineta bicolor) 3 MJG
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 1

Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 4
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 1
Magnolia Warbler (Setophaga magnolia) 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 1
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 1
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 1 male
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 7
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 10

Camino de Hoyo de Palmar Sendero Dec 4,2014 Day 4, CU-01
Dec 4, 2014 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: This walk was not totally productive as we were searching for Quail Dove but we did have an opportunity to listen to local species and see some good looks at birds seen over the past couple of days.
20 species

White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 8
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 4
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 4
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 1
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 6
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 1
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 2
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 4
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 2
Ovenbird (Seiurus aurocapilla) 3
Worm-eating Warbler (Helmitheros vermivorum) 1
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 1
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 2
Magnolia Warbler (Setophaga magnolia) 1
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 1
Yellow-headed Warbler (Teretistris fernandinae) 7
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 5

La Bajada Lagoon Dec 4, 2014 #425 Day 4, CU-01
Dec 4, 2014 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.2 kilometer(s)
Comments: The lagoon at La Bajada is always a great place for water and shore birds. Today we had a nice assemblage of birds and very few mosquitoes.
18 species

Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) 62
Northern Shoveler (Anas clypeata) 4
Green-winged Teal (Anas crecca) 1
Lesser Scaup (Aythya affinis) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 2
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Nyctanassa violacea) 1
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 1
Purple Gallinule (Porphyrio martinicus) 1
American Coot (Fulica americana) 8
Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) 16
American Avocet (Recurvirostra americana) 3
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 3
Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularius) 1
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 1
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 1
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) 1
Northern Waterthrush (Parkesia noveboracensis) 2

Carretera Central de Cuba Dec 4, 2014 Travel Day 4, CU-01
Dec 4, 2014 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
161.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: Travel day to San Diego de los Banos for Giant Kingbird and other specialty birds. This is a long trip made easier by the scenery of the Pinar del Rio landscape and the birds along the way. Here the Mogotes emerge forming a beautiful skyline dotted with tobacco farms and small rural communities.
17 species

Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga) 2
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 4
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 3
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 2
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 500
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 100
Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) 13
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 9
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 11
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 5
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 6 five white morph and one red morph
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5
Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) 3
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 21
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 8
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 5

Hacienda Cortina, La Guira Park Dec 4,2014 #430 Day 4, CU-01
Dec 4, 2014 4:40 PM - 5:40 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.9 kilometer(s)
Comments: After a travel day we met local guide Caesar Suarez to look for Giant Kingbird. No luck but a good start at Hacienda Cortina which is currently under construction and overhaul. The pond and stream are drained so no Least Grebe were present but a few waders could still be found.
17 species

Northern Bobwhite (Colinus virginianus) 15 a nice group of birds and the first seen here by Caesar this season
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 9
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3 one red morph and 2 white morph
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 3
Northern Waterthrush (Parkesia noveboracensis) 2
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 3
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 3
Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra)

Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra) Hacienda Cortina Day 4

Tawny-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius humeralis) 9
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 25
Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca) 15

Cueva de Portales, La Guira Dec 5, 2014 #427 Day 5,
Dec 5, 2014 7:54 AM - 9:54 AM
Protocol: Traveling
1.3 kilometer(s)
Comments: N 22.40123 W 83.28748 Che's Cave and a spectacular morning for Cuban Solitaire and other local specialty birds. My first Pygmy Owl at this location and we also had very brief observations of a soaring Gundlach's Hawk. Scaly-naped and Plain Pigeon were found. Butterfly Bats and Fruit fats were located in the cave. At Los Pinos we added Olive-capped Warbler to our trip list.
35 species

Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 125
Gundlach's Hawk (Accipiter gundlachi) 1 soaring in the distance but seen well on the wing
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 2
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 2
Scaly-naped Pigeon (Patagioenas squamosa) 2
Plain Pigeon (Patagioenas inornata) 2
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 3
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 2
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 1 above the cave
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 7
Cuban Tody (Todus multicolor) 3
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 4
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 2
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 3
Yellow-throated Vireo (Vireo flavifrons) 1
Cuban Solitaire (Myadestes elisabeth) 6 three seen and three heard reverberating off the mogotes walls
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 4
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 3
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 1
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 2
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 2
Olive-capped Warbler (Setophaga pityophila) 2
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 1
Yellow-headed Warbler (Teretistris fernandinae) 4
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 6
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 6
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius humeralis) 5
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 13

Hacienda Cortina, La Guira Park Dec 5,2014 #430 Day 5, CU-01
Dec 5, 2014 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 kilometer(s)

Comments: Giant Kingbird was once again the target species for this walk into Hacienda Cortina from another direction. We stopped briefly along a stream for Warblers and other species, continuing towards the Hacienda where we typically find Giant Kingbird. All three target species were discovered today, Cuban Solitaire, Olive-capped Warbler and Giant Kingbird, which was finally located at the end of our stay by David Hartgrove. Despite the major renovations and work going on here Giant Kingbird remained dedicated to the area. They seemingly paid no attention to the playback going on around them by Caesar. They never called back once until they were located in a low canopied tree and flew off. Some calling did take place after our initial encounter. The weather was fabulous with blue-skies and not too hot.
30 species

Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 200
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 1
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 8
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 2
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 11
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 1
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 4
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 6 There were three males and one female with the female bird getting all the attention from the displaying and cooing males.
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 5
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Giant Kingbird (Tyrannus cubensis) 2

Giant Kingbird (Tyrannus cubensis) Hacienda Cortina

Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Tennessee Warbler (Oreothlypis peregrina) 1 This rare to uncommon transient was photographed. It is also a Non-breeding resident species as stated by Raffaele et al 1998

Tennessee Warbler (Oreothlypis peregrina)

Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 3
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 2
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 2
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 3
Olive-capped Warbler (Setophaga pityophila) 2 an important new species for my list at this location.
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 3
Black-throated Green Warbler (Setophaga virens) 1
Red-legged Honeycreeper (Cyanerpes cyaneus) 1 female with photos
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 10
Baltimore Oriole (Icterus galbula) 1 male seen above the Giant Kingbirds

6 VIAS Nina Bonita Reservoir Dec 5,2014 Day 5, CU-02
Dec 5, 2014 3:55 PM - 4:15 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: The Nina Bonita reservoir is also a good place for a ice cream break. Many Lesser Scaup and other ducks at this location, Ruddy, Blue-winged Teal.
15 species

Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) 55
Lesser Scaup (Aythya affinis) 1700
Ruddy Duck (Oxyura jamaicensis) 45
Pied-billed Grebe (Podilymbus podiceps) 50
Double-crested Cormorant (Phalacrocorax auritus) 4
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 1
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 2
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 8

Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
American Coot (Fulica americana) 175
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 5
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 2
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 10
Scaly-breasted Munia (Lonchura punctulata) 8

Playa Larga Barn Owl Dec 6 2014 Day 6 6:05am, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 6:05 AM - 6:06 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.1 kilometer(s)
Comments: This Owl flew from the road on the way to Bermejas
1 species

Barn Owl (Tyto alba) 1 good looks as it flew from the road, highlighted in the van's headlights

Bermejas Refugio de Fauna Dec 6, 2014 Day 6, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 6:05 AM - 9:05 AM
Protocol: Traveling
3.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: No other place on earth is like the Refugio in Bermejas. Cuban Parakeet, Parrots, Owls and more.
32 species

Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 10
Blue-headed Quail-Dove (Starnoenas cyanocephala) 4
Key West Quail-Dove (Geotrygon chrysia) 2
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 6
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 8
Bare-legged Owl (Margarobyas lawrencii) 1

Bare-legged Owl (Otus lawrencii) Bermejas Cuba Day 6

Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 1 heard and seen at another location
Bee Hummingbird (Mellisuga helenae) 3 the first seen at this location
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
Cuban Trogon (Priotelus temnurus) 4
Cuban Tody (Todus multicolor) 4
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 3
Northern Flicker (Colaptes auratus) 1
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 1 actually seen in the forest perhaps eating crab?
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1 white morph
Cuban Parrot (Amazona leucocephala) 3
Cuban Parakeet (Psittacara euops) 150 two large flocks landed, and flocks photographed
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 3
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 3
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 5
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 2 seen well in the scope
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 5
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 3
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 9
Cedar Waxwing (Bombycilla cedrorum) 1 seen well by Fern Murphy
Ovenbird (Seiurus aurocapilla) 4
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 5
Yellow-headed Warbler (Teretistris fernandinae) 4
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius humeralis) 15
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 20

San Blas Matanzas Cuba Dec 6, 2014 Day 6, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 10:00 AM - 10:15 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 kilometer(s)
Comments: Looking for Fernandina's Flicker with no luck here.
14 species

Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 5
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 25
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 1
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 3
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 20
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3 two white and one red morph
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 1

Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 12
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 7

La Cuchilla Dec 6 2014 DAY 6, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 10:33 AM - 11:33 AM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: Red-shouldered Blackbird was a target which we found in good numbers but could not get them to come out of the swamp.
17 species

Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 2
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 30
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 2
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 1 photos
Sora (Porzana carolina) 1 heard well by many
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 5
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 2
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1 white morph
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 6
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 8
Red-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius assimilis) 25
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 47

Culeta Buena/Playa Giron Dec 6, 2014 Day 6, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 12:26 PM - 3:56 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 kilometer(s)
Comments: Culeta Buena is a favorite stop for a little rest and relaxation after several long days of Birding. With separate walks going on throughout our stay here we collected a few good birds and snorkeled for the birds of the sea.
22 species

Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 5
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 30
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 1
Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularius) 1
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 4
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 2
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 1
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 3
Cave Swallow (Petrochelidon fulva) 45
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 2
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 4
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 1
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 2
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 11
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 5
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 3

Bermejas Refugio de Fauna Dec 6,2014 Day 6 pm, CU-04
Dec 6, 2014 4:45 PM - 6:10 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: We birded here in town until dark looking for Fernandina's Flicker, then Cuban Nightjar which we all had very close looks at about 5 feet or less initially when it flew through the group.
13 species

Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 15
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (Glaucidium siju) 1 calling
Cuban Nightjar (Antrostomus cubanensis) 1 seen closely as it flew through the group with a spot light
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 20
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 2
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 4 white morph
Cuban Parrot (Amazona leucocephala) 5
Cuban Parakeet (Psittacara euops) 25

Cuban Parakeet (Aratinga euops) Bermejas

Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 10
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 34
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 2

La Turba Zapata Dec 7, 2014 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 8:00 AM - 9:35 AM
Protocol: Traveling
1.5 mile(s)
Comments: Zapata Wren and Zapata Sparrow are the target species for the morning. Both were found with ease today with excellent looks and photos for everyone in the group. Both birds are named for the Zapata Cienaga. Thomas Barbour named Zapata Wren for his Spanish soldier friend Fermin Cervera who collected both birds near Santo Tomas in 1926 allowing Barbour to describe and name this and Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata) for famous professor Carlos de la Torre.
23 species

Double-crested Cormorant (Phalacrocorax auritus) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 4
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 1
Sora (Porzana carolina) 1
Spotted Rail (Pardirallus maculatus) 1 heard
Common Gallinule (Gallinula galeata) 3
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 1
White-crowned Pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala) 1
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 5
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 25
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 20
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 2
Tree Swallow (Tachycineta bicolor) 3500 The stream of Tree Swallows passed overhead for 30 minutes with everyone looking for other swallow species mixed in but not finding any.
Zapata Wren (Ferminia cerverai) 3

Zapata Wren female (Ferminia cerverai) La Turba

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 3
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 17
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 3
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 6
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1
Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata) 3

Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata) La Turba Zapata

La Boca Cocodrillo Farm Dec 7, 2014 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 9:43 AM - 11:03 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: La Boca is a birding hotspot and this time it included Fernandina's Flicker and a good group of Warblers.
32 species

Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga) 1 flying over head
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Purple Gallinule (Porphyrio martinicus) 2
Common Gallinule (Gallinula galeata) 3
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Sphyrapicus varius) 2
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 2
Fernandina's Flicker (Colaptes fernandinae) 2 male and female with some apparent breeding behavior and displaying. The call was incredible loud.

Fernandina's Flicker (Colaptes fernandinae) la Boca

American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1 white morph
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 2
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1 eating an anole... with photos
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 2
Red-legged Thrush (Turdus plumbeus) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 3
Northern Waterthrush (Parkesia noveboracensis) 1
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 1
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 2
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 4
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 1
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 3
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 4
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 1
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 2
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 3
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 6
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 25
Cuban Oriole (Icterus melanopsis) 2 with photos

Tiki Resturante Playa Larga Dec 7 2014 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 12:05 PM - 1:05 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: This list is partially from Hotel Playa Larga and Tiki Restaurant, site of the now infamous El Gato.
21 species

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) 2
Neotropic Cormorant (Phalacrocorax brasilianus) 1 seen well in the scope at Tiki Restraint
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 23
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Nyctanassa violacea) 2
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 65
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1 with a fish
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 3
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 1
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 3
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 1
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1 white morph
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 1
Tree Swallow (Tachycineta bicolor) 3
Barn Swallow (Hirundo rustica) 1 seen at Playa Larga Hotel
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 2
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 15

Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 3:00 PM - 3:45 PM
Protocol: Traveling
7.3 mile(s)
Comments: This list represents birds seen from the gatehouse to our first stop at the first observation deck.
11 species

Pied-billed Grebe (Podilymbus podiceps) 1
Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 1
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 1
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 3
American Coot (Fulica americana) 40
Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) 2
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 1
Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 3
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 1
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 3
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 6

Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Stop 1&2 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 3:50 PM - 4:15 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: The first observation deck offers great views over a large open expanse of the Las Salinas mangrove habitat. Many American Flamingos seen here for the first good views of them. Everyone was excited with waterbirds everywhere.
26 species

American Wigeon (Anas americana) 127 One very good sized flock mixed with Coots and Blue-winged Teal
Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) 33
Northern Shoveler (Anas clypeata) 7
Lesser Scaup (Aythya affinis) 4
Pied-billed Grebe (Podilymbus podiceps) 14
American Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) 606
Neotropic Cormorant (Phalacrocorax brasilianus) 57
American White Pelican (Pelecanus erythrorhynchos) 17 increasingly more abundant each your
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 22
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 4
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 6
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 3
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 3
Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 19
Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 10 one white morph
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 2
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 1
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1
American Coot (Fulica americana) 45
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 2 heard
Willet (Tringa semipalmata) 4
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 2
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 5
Yellow Warbler (Setophaga petechia) 1 Caribbean race
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 1

Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7, 2014 Stop 3 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 4:49 PM - 5:29 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: Our third stop at the observation deck and many more great birds to see and count. More American Flamingos, a Cuban Black Hark and Northern Harrier.
20 species

American Wigeon (Anas americana) 60
American Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) 198
Magnificent Frigatebird (Fregata magnificens) 2 immature
Neotropic Cormorant (Phalacrocorax brasilianus) 48
American White Pelican (Pelecanus erythrorhynchos) 52 one very large flock flying towards us, then found later settled on the water
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 6
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 7
Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 4
Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 3 one white morph
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 2
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1
Northern Harrier (Circus cyaneus) 1
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 1 flying and well seen
American Coot (Fulica americana) 5
Black-bellied Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) 2
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 2
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 3
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 13
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 3
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 1

Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Stop 4 Day 7, CU-04
Dec 7, 2014 5:31 PM - 5:56 PM
Protocol: Stationary
Comments: This stop produced many shorebirds which we did not have enough time to fully count as we were losing our light.
17 species

American Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) 1
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 1
Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 43
Semipalmated Plover (Charadrius semipalmatus) 1
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 2
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 10
Willet (Tringa semipalmata) 3
Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) 4
Red Knot (Calidris canutus) 4
Dunlin (Calidris alpina) 6 compared to Red Knots
Least Sandpiper (Calidris minutilla) 1
Pectoral Sandpiper (Calidris melanotos) 1 one standing next to a least Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher (Limnodromus griseus) 110
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1

Hotel Playa Larga Dec 8, 2014 Day 8, CU-04
Dec 8, 2014 6:30 AM - 8:30 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: These are some of the birds that were found by all of the team over the course of the morning.
21 species

Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 3
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 1
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 5
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 10
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 4
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 2 white morph
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 3
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 4
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 2
Yellow Warbler (Setophaga petechia) 1
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 10
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 3
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 25
Cuban Oriole (Icterus melanopsis) 2

Matanzas Province Autopista Dec 8,2014 Day 8, CU-04
Dec 8, 2014 8:30 AM - 9:17 AM
Protocol: Traveling
42.0 mile(s)
Comments: Travel to Cayo Coco. A Jacana was clearly seen from the bus folding its wings
12 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 41
Northern Jacana (Jacana spinosa) 1 on the side of the road leaving Zapata
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 4
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (Coccyzus merlini) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 8
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 7 all white morph
Cuban Parrot (Amazona leucocephala) 2 flying along the highway as we left Zapata
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 2
Red-shouldered Blackbird (Agelaius assimilis) 2 flying along the highway after La Boca
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 12
Tricolored Munia (Lonchura malacca) 4

Cienfuegos Province Dec 8,2014 Travel Day 8, CU-06
Dec 8, 2014 9:17 AM - 1:17 PM
Protocol: Traveling
45.0 mile(s)
Comments: Cienfuegos Province birds along the way to Cayo Coco
8 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 2
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 75
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 9
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 1

Villa Clara Province Dec 8, 2014 Travel Day 8, CU-05
Dec 8, 2014 10:14 AM - 1:34 PM
Protocol: Traveling
89.0 mile(s)
Comments: Travel days are always interesting because of the observations made along the way. Farm lands and rolling hill make this a scenic section to ride.
10 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 6
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 100
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1

Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 10
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 2
Cave Swallow (Petrochelidon fulva) 5
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 1
Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) 2
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 1
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 37 Mile 259 parador

Rio Azul Palador Dec 8, 2014 Day 8, CU-07
Dec 8, 2014 1:10 PM - 1:59 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.1 mile(s)
Comments: Louisiana Waterthrush was the first bird I found along the stream bank wagging its tail and piping away. Giraldo found a Painted Bunting
6 species

Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 2 in the trees..an oxymoron
Louisiana Waterthrush (Parkesia motacilla) 1 found and a bad photo by Michael and others
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 1
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 3
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 3
Painted Bunting (Passerina ciris) 1 found by Giraldo and others on the team

Ciego de Avila Province Dec8, 2014 Travel Day 8, CU-08
Dec 8, 2014 1:56 PM - 3:31 PM
Protocol: Traveling
67.0 mile(s)
Comments: Travel through Ciego de Avila province to Cayo Coco.
10 species
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 2
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 41
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 50
Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 13

Cayo Coco Shorebirds Dec 8, 2014 Day 8,
CU-08
Dec 8, 2014 4:45 PM - 5:10 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.2 kilometer(s)
Comments: We stopped for some shorebirds and other goodies before going to Cayo Coco Hotel. Great finish to the travel day.

American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 3
Cuban Crow (Corvus nasicus) 10
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 1

Causeway to Cayo Coco Dec 8, 2014 Jardines del Rey Day 8, CU-08
Dec 8, 2014 3:32 AM - 5:12 AM
Protocol: Traveling
19.0 kilometer(s)
Comments: This is the first exposure to the northern cays of Cuba and an opportunity to see the Atlantic Ocean.
13 species

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) 8
American Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) 1000 most likely more on the horizon and all pink
Magnificent Frigatebird (Fregata magnificens) 1
Double-crested Cormorant (Phalacrocorax auritus) 18
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 3
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 19
Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 1
Roseate Spoonbill (Platalea ajaja) 8
Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) 15
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 10
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 4
Merlin (Falco columbarius) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1

Cayo Coco Oriente Warbler Dec8, 2014 Day 8, CU-08
Dec 8, 2014 4:25 PM - 4:50 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 kilometer(s)
Comments: This is our first stop for a Cayo Coco specialty bird, Oriente Warbler
5 species

Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 1
Magnolia Warbler (Setophaga magnolia) 1
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 1
Oriente Warbler (Teretistris fornsi) 5
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 3

11 species (+1 other taxa)

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) 1
Neotropic Cormorant (Phalacrocorax brasilianus) 11
Great Blue Heron (Blue form) (Ardea herodias [herodias Group]) 10
Great Blue Heron (White form) (Ardea herodias occidentalis) 2
Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 1

Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 2
Osprey (American) (Pandion haliaetus carolinensis) 1
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 116
Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) 10
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 7
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 2

Cayo Romano Dec 9, 2014 Day 9 #462, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 6:33 AM - 7:23 AM
Protocol: Traveling
8.1 mile(s)
Comments: The team made a few short stops but the target was Thick-billed Vireo and Cuban Gnatcatcher. One Peregrine Falcon was found hunting over the mangroves for shorebirds.
31 species

American Wigeon (Anas americana) 1
Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) 20
Magnificent Frigatebird (Fregata magnificens) 4
Great Blue Heron (White form) (Ardea herodias occidentalis) 1
Snowy Egret (Egretta thula) 2
Reddish Egret (Egretta rufescens) 3
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 10
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 5
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 3 sitting in mangroves or small trees
Clapper Rail (Rallus crepitans) 3
American Coot (Fulica americana) 5
Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca) 1
Willet (Eastern) (Tringa semipalmata semipalmata) 2
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 3
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 4
American Kestrel (Northern) (Falco sparverius [sparverius Group]) 1
Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus) 1
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 2
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 2
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 4
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 2
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 2
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 1
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 11
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (Setophaga coronata coronata) 2
Yellow-throated Warbler (White-lored) (Setophaga dominica albilora) 1
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 2
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 3
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 1

Cayo Paredon Grande Dec 9,2014 Day 9, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 7:24 AM - 8:59 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.6 mile(s)
Comments: Cayo Paradon Grande is under SIEGE with DEVELOPMENT DESTROYING AND FRAGMENTING HABITAT for the Relic Population of Thick-billed Vireo, Vireo de las Bahamas (Vireo crassirostris) . ROAD BUILDING IS EXTENSIVE WITH TOTAL DISREGARD. The plan for this isolated and totally unique cay is for All-Inclusive Hotels with a myriad of roads crisscrossing habitat for Cuban Gnatcatcher and Thick-billed Vireo. We have never had as much trouble locating this species than on this trip. The road work is extensive and I fear for this location and our diminutive Vireo.
26 species

Great Blue Heron (Blue form) (Ardea herodias [herodias Group]) 1
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 2
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 2
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 2
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 1
Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) 1
Spotted Sandpiper (Actitis macularius) 1
Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) 1
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 2
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 5
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 3
Thick-billed Vireo (Vireo crassirostris) 2

Thick-billed Vireo (Vireo crassirostris)

Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 2
Tennessee Warbler (Oreothlypis peregrina) 1 Several of us had very good observations of this Tennessee Warbler and I believe it is my first one at this location, with Green back and dark eye line and white under tail coverts.

Tennessee Warbler (Oreothlypis peregrina)

Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 5
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 2
Yellow Warbler (Golden) (Setophaga petechia [petechia Group]) 5
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 2
Oriente Warbler (Teretistris fornsi) 9
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 1
Western Spindalis (Cuban) (Spindalis zena pretrei) 3
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 4

Hotel Cayo Coco Dec 9,2014 Day 9, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: The group found several birds this morning on the grounds of Cayo Coco hotel.
16 species

West Indian Woodpecker (Melanerpes superciliaris) 1
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 2
Red-legged Thrush (Eastern) (Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus/albiventris) 1
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 1
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 4
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 2
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 1
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 1
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 2
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Setophaga coronata) 1
Yellow-throated Warbler (Setophaga dominica) 1
Western Spindalis (Spindalis zena) 3
Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra) 1
Cuban Oriole (Icterus melanopsis) 1

Cayo Guillermo Bahama Mockingbird Dec 9, 2014 Day 9, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 10:35 AM - 11:20 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: #464 N 22.34009 W 78.38599 is the location for Bahama Mockingbird and a NEW ALL-INCLUSIVE HOTEL. This work is taking much of the habitat for this rare species and renews our fear for this species on Cuba as well. One Mangrove Cuckoo sits for all to see well and mega photo session takes place. Another front from the north is bringing cold wet weather for the rest of the day. Truly fortuitous, we nailed both Bahama Mockingbird and Mangrove Cuckoo here because it had just previously rained and the birds were drying and preening.
14 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 1
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 2
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 1
Mangrove Cuckoo (Coccyzus minor) 1 photos coming
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 5
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 2
Bahama Mockingbird (Mimus gundlachii) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 2
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 4
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 1
Yellow-faced Grassquit (Tiaris olivaceus) 3
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 3
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 1

Cayo Guillermo Lagoon 1&2 Dec 9, 2014 Day 9, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 11:35 AM - 12:35 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: Always a great place to stop for shore birds and waterbirds. We found a flock of West-Indian Whistling Duck
28 species

West Indian Whistling-Duck (Dendrocygna arborea) 20
American Wigeon (Anas americana) 1
Blue-winged Teal (Anas discors) 450
Northern Shoveler (Anas clypeata) 3
Pied-billed Grebe (Podilymbus podiceps) 6

American Flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) 29
Neotropic Cormorant (Phalacrocorax brasilianus) 2
Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga) 2
Great Blue Heron (White form) (Ardea herodias occidentalis) 2
White Ibis (Eudocimus albus) 15
Roseate Spoonbill (Platalea ajaja) 2
Clapper Rail (Rallus crepitans) 5
Common Gallinule (Gallinula galeata) 10
American Coot (Fulica americana) 150
Black-bellied Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) 4
Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) 1
Willet (Eastern) (Tringa semipalmata semipalmata) 13
Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) 2
Short-billed Dowitcher (Limnodromus griseus) 10
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 2
Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) 3
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 1
Northern Waterthrush (Parkesia noveboracensis) 25
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 10
Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 1
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 10

Las Coloradas Playa Dec 9, 2014 Day 9, CU-08
Dec 9, 2014 3:05 PM - 3:30 PM
Protocol: Traveling
0.2 mile(s)
Comments: RAIN has halted our day just as we photographed Piping Plover. Because of the rain we cut our day short and headed back to Sol Cayo Coco. We were treated to a flock of mixed shorebirds
16 species
Magnificent Frigatebird (Fregata magnificens) 2
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 3
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 3
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 2
Black-bellied Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) 7
Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus) 2

Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus) Los Colorados Playa

Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus) Los Colorados Playa

Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) 63
Sanderling (Calidris alba) 32
Short-billed Dowitcher (Limnodromus griseus) 7
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 15
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 11
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 1

Cayo Coco--Cueva del Jabali Dec 10,2014 Day 10, CU-08
Dec 10, 2014 6:50 AM - 8:15 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: We took some time to find the Cayo Coco race of Zapata Sparrow after locating four Key West Quail Doves.
22 species

Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 4
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 2
Key West Quail-Dove (Geotrygon chrysia) 4 well seen in the scope

Key West Quail Dove (Geotrygon chrysia) Barbiquejo Cueva Jabbali

Zenaida Dove (Zenaida aurita) 2
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 1
Cuban Tody (Todus multicolor) 1
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 1
Merlin (Taiga) (Falco columbarius columbarius) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
White-eyed Vireo (Vireo griseus) 1
Cuban Vireo (Vireo gundlachii) 2
Red-legged Thrush (Eastern) (Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus/albiventris) 2
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 1
Ovenbird (Seiurus aurocapilla) 1
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 1
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 2
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 1 female
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 2
Oriente Warbler (Teretistris fornsi) 1
Cuban Bullfinch (Melopyrrha nigra) 1
Western Spindalis (Cuban) (Spindalis zena pretrei) 2
Zapata Sparrow (Torreornis inexpectata) 6 the behavior of this subspecies helps to set it apart as they spend a great deal of time on the ground foraging and less time in the trees like the Zapata race. This race is similar to Zapata in plumage.

Sol Cayo Coco Hotel Dec 10,2014 Day 10, CU-08
Dec 10, 2014 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
1.0 mile(s)
Comments: This list represents birds from around the Hotel grounds by the group. Today is checkout so last minute attempts to gather in all of the beauty of this place is what motivates the group and sends everyone out and about.
25 species

Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 1
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 7
Green Heron (Butorides virescens) 1
Cuban Black Hawk (Buteogallus gundlachii) 1
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 20
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 2
Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) 5
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 7
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 2
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 4 some excellent photos taken of emeralds this morning

Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii)

Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii)

Northern Flicker (Cuban) (Colaptes auratus chrysocaulosus) 1 female and probable a nesting bird on the grounds

Northern Flicker (Cuban race) female (Colaptes auratus)

American Kestrel (Cuban) (Falco sparverius sparveroides) 2
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Myiarchus sagrae) 1
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 2
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 3
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 5
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 3
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 2
The photo below shows BTBW eating fruit from the Bougainvillea. I watched this bird knock the fruit out of the bush than fly to the ground, pick up the fruit and begin to masticate it before swallowing.

Bijirita Azul de Garganta Negra (Setophaga caerulescens) BTBW Cayo Coco Cuba

Prairie Warbler (Setophaga discolor) 2
Oriente Warbler (Teretistris fornsi) 1
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 28
Cuban Oriole (Icterus melanopsis) 1

Cayo Coco Causeway Dec 10, 2014 travel Day 10, CU-08
Dec 10, 2014 2:15 PM - 2:40 PM
Protocol: Traveling
10.5 mile(s)
Comments: Crossing the Causeway we needed to find a few Sandwich Terns which we did.
10 species

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) 6
Double-crested Cormorant (Phalacrocorax auritus) 3
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 1
Great Blue Heron (Blue form) (Ardea herodias [herodias Group]) 1
Tricolored Heron (Egretta tricolor) 1
Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) 70
Laughing Gull (Leucophaeus atricilla) 1
Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 12
Sandwich Tern (Thalasseus sandvicensis) 5
American Kestrel (Cuban) (Falco sparverius sparveroides) 1 white morph

Ciego de Avila Province Dec 10, 2014 Day 10, CU-08
Dec 10, 2014 2:25 PM - 3:10 PM
Protocol: Traveling
50.0 mile(s)
Comments: Travel day to Santa Clara. These are a few bird seen during our return trip.
5 species

Anhinga (Anhinga anhinga) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 50
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 4
American Kestrel (Cuban) (Falco sparverius sparveroides) 1
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 2

Villa Santa Clara Province December 10 2014 Day 10,
Dec 10, 2014 5:15 PM - 6:00 PM
Protocol: Traveling
35.0 mile(s)
Comments: Ken, Michael and Robert saw a Goose fly over the road. The light was fading as we drove along the highway to Santa Clara. This was a possible White-fronted Goose but the combination of low light and traveling along the highway made this a difficult bird to ID correctly with confidence.
7 species (+1 other taxa)

goose sp. (Anser/Chen/Branta sp.) 1 We could not make a positive ID but there was no doubt that this was a goose.
Great Egret (Ardea alba) 2
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 25
Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) 3
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 3
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 1
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 10

Hotel Los Caneyes Dec 11 2014 #468 Day 11, CU-05
Dec 11, 2014 6:30 AM - 7:30 AM
Protocol: Traveling
0.5 mile(s)
Comments: Giraldo and I took the group around the hotel grounds. On the outskirts we located a couple of Gundlach's Hawks and many Neotropical migrants including several Indigo Bunting and many Warblers. The morning light had just broken when we began this walk. Everyone was excited to be in the field as we began to

wind down our trip.
27 species

Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) 1 flying away from the group in the morning light
Black-crowned Night-Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax) 2 landed in the trees at the hotel sunrise
Gundlach's Hawk (Accipiter gundlachi) 2 with nest material fly away from the hotel
Common Ground-Dove (Columbina passerina) 4
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 3
Antillean Palm-Swift (Tachornis phoenicobia) 250 The thatched roof huts are a perfect home for Swifts. As the sun rose many birds began foraging
Cuban Emerald (Chlorostilbon ricordii) 5
Cuban Green Woodpecker (Xiphidiopicus percussus) 1
American Kestrel (Falco sparverius) 1
Cuban Pewee (Contopus caribaeus) 3
Loggerhead Kingbird (Tyrannus caudifasciatus) 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Polioptila caerulea) 3
Red-legged Thrush (Eastern) (Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus/albiventris) 4
Gray Catbird (Dumetella carolinensis) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 2
Black-and-white Warbler (Mniotilta varia) 1
Orange-crowned Warbler (Oreothlypis celata) 1 photos pending this is a rare bird seen by one participant with photos under review.
Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas) 6
American Redstart (Setophaga ruticilla) 3
Cape May Warbler (Setophaga tigrina) 4
Northern Parula (Setophaga americana) 2
Black-throated Blue Warbler (Setophaga caerulescens) 3
Palm Warbler (Setophaga palmarum) 25
Yellow-throated Warbler (White-lored) (Setophaga dominica albilora) 5
Indigo Bunting (Passerina cyanea) 25 a mixed flock of males, females and immature were lingering in the trees around the Hotel.
Cuban Blackbird (Dives atroviolaceus) 30
Greater Antillean Grackle (Quiscalus niger) 20

Santa Clara and Che' Memorial Dec 11, 2014 Day 11, CU-05
Dec 11, 2014 9:40 AM - 10:20 AM
Protocol: Traveling
20.0 mile(s)
Comments: Birds of Che's memorial and a Smooth-billed Ani, Kingfisher and Kestrel on the road to Havana. This is our last field day.
5 species

Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 150 all around the city TV's were twisting up into the sky.
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 18 seven at Che' Memorial near a congested community of Cuban people.
Belted Kingfisher (Megaceryle alcyon) 1
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus) 40 Che's memorial and surrounding back yards

Cienfuegos Province A1 #470 N22.25622 W80.13245 Dec 11 2014 Day 11, CU-06
Dec 11, 2014 10:24 AM - 11:24 AM
Protocol: Traveling
46.0 mile(s)
Comments: Traveling through Cienfuegos Province A1 (N22.25622 W80.132245) is the approximate location we found Sharp-shinned Hawk. Three of us had observations of flight, size and shape with little doubt that we had seen a Sharp-shinned Hawk.
4 species

Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 550 this is a rough estimate of large numbers of Cattle Egret.
Sharp-shinned Hawk (Accipiter striatus) 1 (#470 N22.25622 W80.132245) is the approximate location we found Sharp-shinned Hawk. Three of us had observations of flight, size and shape with little doubt that we had seen a Sharp-shinned Hawk.
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 6
Crested Caracara (Caracara cheriway) 2 these birds were both chasing what appeared to be small shore birds over a large recently-cut field.

Matanzas Province Autopista Dec 11, 2014 Day 11, CU-04
Dec 10, 2014 11:25 AM - 1:10 PM
Protocol: Traveling
73.0 mile(s)
Comments: Birds of the Matanzas Province along autopista.
8 species

Great Egret (Ardea alba) 6
Little Blue Heron (Egretta caerulea) 1
Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis) 75
Turkey Vulture (Cathartes aura) 100
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 1
Smooth-billed Ani (Crotophaga ani) 6

American Kestrel (Cuban) (Falco sparverius sparveroides) 4 two white morph and two possible reds
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5

Havana Province Dec 11, 2014 Day 11, CU-03
Dec 10, 2014 2:25 PM - 6:25 PM
Protocol: Traveling
30.0 mile(s)
Comments: The Final bird list for the Halifax River Audubon Cuban Bird Survey. I leave this trip with a fear in my heart for the Northern Cays. Cayo Paradon Grande is my greatest concern because of habitat destruction, in retrospect; December 17, 2014 and the announcement by the U.S. Government that we would start diplomatic relationships with this important Island in the Stream. My greatest concern is how the American people will treat this island. I would like to see a slow change in terms of unrestricted travel to Cuba. This is a fragile land and one that requires our utmost attention to Ecological detail. We must not allow the Americanization of this sovereign State or the destruction of this fragile Island ecology.
9 species

Pied-billed Grebe (Podilymbus podiceps) 1
Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) 3
American Coot (Fulica americana) 2
Herring Gull (American) (Larus argentatus smithsonianus) 2

Yellow-throated Warbler

Royal Tern (Thalasseus maximus) 1
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) (Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)) 75 Havana
Eurasian Collared-Dove (Streptopelia decaocto) 15 Havana
Mourning Dove (Zenaida macroura) 1
Northern Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) 5

Caged Yellow-faced Grassquit Havana

Loggerhead Kingbird with an Anole La Boca

Dr. Orlando Garrido Havana

All Photos in this document are the copyright of Michael J. Good, MSc

Summarization of December 1-13, 2014 Cuban Bird Survey

Halifax River Audubon Cuba Bird Survey : Dec 1-13, 2014 Species Totals

Report Details

Date range:	Dec 1, 2014 - Dec 15, 2014	Total # of Species:	175
		Total # of Checklists:	65

Location(s): 6 VIAS Nina Bonita Reservoir Dec 5,2014 Day 5; Artemisa Province Travel west Dec 2 2014 Day 2; Bermejas Refugio de Fauna Dec 6,2014 Day 6; Bermejas Refugio de Fauna Dec 6,2014 Day 6 pm; Cabo Corrientes Cuban Black Hawk Dec 3 2014 Day 3; Cabo Corrientes, Maria la Gorda to La Bajada Dec 3 2014 Day 3; Cabo San Antonio, El Verraco Am. Pipit Dec 3 2014 Day 3; Camino de Hoyo de Palmar Sendero Dec 4,2014 Day 4; Carretera Central de Cuba Dec 4,2014 Travel Day 4; Carretera Central de Cuba Sandino Dec 2, 2014 Day 2 travel; Causeway to Cayo Coco Dec 8,2014 Jardines del Rey Day 8; Cayo Coco Causeway Dec 10,2014 travel Day 10; Cayo Coco Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Cayo Coco Oriente Warbler Dec8,2014 Day 8; Cayo Coco Shorebirds Dec 8, 2014 Day 8; Cayo Coco--Cueva del Jabali Dec 10,2014 Day 10; Cayo Guillermo Bahama Mockingbird Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Cayo Guillermo Lagoon 1&2 Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Cayo Paredon Grande Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Cayo Romano Dec 9,2014 Day 9 #462; Ciego de Avila Province Dec 10,2014 Day 10; Ciego de Avila Province Dec8,2014 Travel Day 8; Cienfuegos Province A1 #470 N22.25622 W80.13245 Dec 11 2014 Day 11; Cienfuegos Province Dec 8,2014 Travel Day 8; Cueva de Portales, La Guira Dec 5,2014 #427 Day 5; Culeta Buena/Playa Giron Dec 6,2014 Day 6; Estacion Ecologica Guanahacabibes Dec 4, 2014 #423 Day 4; Estacion Ecologica Guanahacabibes Dec 3, 2014 #423 Day 3; Hacienda Cortina, La Guira Park Dec 4,2014 #430 Day 4; Hacienda Cortina,La Guira Park Dec 5,2014 #430 Day 5; Havana Province Dec11,2014 Day 11; Hotel Cayo Coco Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Hotel Habana Paseo Dec 2, 2014 # 413 Day 2; Hotel Los Caneyes Dec 11 2014 #468 Day 11; Hotel Playa Larga Dec 8,2014 Day 8; La Bajada Lagoon Dec 4, 2014 #425 Day 4; La Boca Cocodrillo Farm Dec 7,2014 Day 7; La Chorrera campismo Travel day Dec 2 2014 #414 Day 2; La Cuchilla Dec 6 2014 DAY 6; La Turba Zapata Dec7, 2014 Day 7; Las Coloradas Playa Dec 9,2014 Day 9; Los Barrigonas Dec 2 2014 Day 2; Maria la Gorda Dec 2, 2014 #419 Day 2; Maria la Gorda Dec 3, 2014 #419 Day 3; Matanzas Province Autopista Dec 11,2014 Day 11; Matanzas Province Autopista Dec 8,2014 Day 8; Orland Garrido's House Day 1 Dec 1 2014; Parque Nacional La Guira Los Pinos Dec 5,2014 Day 5; Pinar del Rio Dec 2, 2014 Day 2; Playa Larga Barn Owl Dec 6 2014 Day 6 6:05am; Rio Azul Palador Dec 11,2014 Day 11; Rio Azul Palador Dec 8,2014 Day 8; San Blas Matanzas Cuba Dec 6,2014 Day 6; Santa Clara and Che' Memorial Dec 11,2014 Day 11; Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Day 7; Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Las Salinas Day 7; Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Stop 1&2 Day 7; Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7 2014 Stop 4 Day 7; Sendero Salina de Brito Dec 7,2014 Stop 3 Day 7; Sol Cayo Coco Hotel Dec 10,2014 Day 10; The San Luis Ditch Dec 2, 2014 Day 2 # 418; Tiki Resturante Playa Larga Dec 7 2014 Day 7; Villa Clara Province Dec8,2014 Travel Day 8; Villa Santa Clara Province December 10 2014;

Zunzuncito Hotspot El Verraco Dec 3,2014 Day 3 # 421

Summary				
	Dec 1-5	Dec 6-10	Dec 11-15	
Number of Species	121	143	30	
Number of Individuals	4,668	10,379	967=	16014
Number of Checklists	24	39	2	

Total Number of Birds (sample size)				
Species Name	Dec 1-5	Dec 6-10	Dec 11-15	
West Indian Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna arborea*)	--	20 (1)	--	
goose sp. (*Anser/Chen/Branta sp.*)	--	1 (1)	--	
American Wigeon (*Anas americana*)	--	189 (4)	--	
Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*)	117 (2)	504 (4)	--	
Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)	4 (1)	10 (2)	--	
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)	1 (1)	--	--	
Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*)	1,701 (2)	4 (1)	--	
Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)	--	17 (4)	--	
Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)	45 (1)	--	--	
Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)	15 (1)	--	--	
Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)	50 (1)	22 (4)	--	
American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)	--	1,834 (5)	--	
Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata*	--	10	--	

magnificens)		(5)	
Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)	--	119 (5)	--
Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)	4 (1)	22 (3)	--
Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)	2 (1)	4 (3)	--
American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)	--	69 (2)	--
Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)	1 (1)	37 (9)	--
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)	8 (4)	32 (13)	1 (1)
Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)	20 (6)	61 (16)	--
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)	6 (4)	8 (5)	--
Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)	9 (6)	14 (10)	--
Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*)	2 (2)	29 (5)	--
Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*)	1 (1)	24 (6)	--
Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)	703 (4)	487 (13)	550 (1)
Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)	8 (5)	16 (9)	--
Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)	--	7 (4)	2 (1)
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*)	2 (2)	2 (1)	--
White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*)	8 (3)	120 (10)	--
Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)	--	11 (3)	--
Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)	547 (10)	515 (11)	--
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)	3 (3)	9 (7)	--

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*)	2 (1)	--	--
Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)	--	1 (1)	--
Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)	--	--	1 (1)
Gundlach's Hawk (*Accipiter gundlachi*)	2 (2)	--	2 (1)
Cuban Black Hawk (*Buteogallus gundlachii*)	6 (4)	17 (7)	--
Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)	1 (1)	--	--
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)	6 (4)	6 (4)	--
Clapper Rail (*Rallus crepitans*)	--	12 (3)	--
Sora (*Porzana carolina*)	--	2 (2)	--
Spotted Rail (*Pardirallus maculatus*)	--	1 (1)	--
Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*)	3 (2)	2 (1)	--
Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*)	--	16 (3)	--
American Coot (*Fulica americana*)	183 (2)	247 (6)	--
Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)	39 (3)	71 (2)	--
American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*)	3 (1)	2 (1)	--
Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)	--	13 (3)	--
Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)	--	1 (1)	--
Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)	--	2 (1)	--
Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)	6 (3)	12 (5)	--
Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*)	1 (1)	1 (1)	--

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)	3 (3)	3 (3)	--
Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*)	1 (1)	--	--
Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)	5 (3)	17 (5)	--
Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*)	--	28 (6)	--
Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*)	2 (1)	--	--
Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)	--	96 (5)	--
Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)	--	4 (1)	--
Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)	--	32 (1)	--
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)	--	6 (1)	--
Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)	5 (1)	1 (1)	--
Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)	--	1 (1)	--
Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*)	--	127 (3)	--
Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)	8 (4)	170 (9)	--
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)	2 (2)	--	--
Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)	--	2 (1)	--
Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)	1 (1)	16 (4)	--
Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*)	10 (2)	47 (9)	--
Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)	--	5 (1)	--
Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)	29 (3)	91 (5)	--
Scaly-naped Pigeon (*Patagioenas squamosa*)	2 (1)	--	--

White-crowned Pigeon (*Patagioenas leucocephala*)	19 (6)	2 (2)	--
Plain Pigeon (*Patagioenas inornata*)	8 (3)	--	--
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)	4 (2)	21 (3)	--
Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)	23 (8)	24 (7)	4 (1)
Blue-headed Quail-Dove (*Starnoenas cyanocephala*)	--	4 (1)	--
Key West Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon chrysia*)	--	6 (2)	--
White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)	5 (4)	--	--
Zenaida Dove (*Zenaida aurita*)	15 (5)	14 (4)	--
Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)	22 (5)	46 (13)	--
Mangrove Cuckoo (*Coccyzus minor*)	--	1 (1)	--
Great Lizard-Cuckoo (*Coccyzus merlini*)	12 (7)	7 (5)	--
Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)	48 (9)	156 (16)	9 (2)
Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)	--	1 (1)	--
Bare-legged Owl (*Margarobyas lawrencii*)	--	1 (1)	--
Cuban Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium siju*)	4 (3)	3 (3)	--
Greater Antillean Nightjar (*Antrostomus cubanensis*)	--	1 (1)	--
Antillean Palm-Swift (*Tachornis phoenicobia*)	70 (5)	23 (2)	250 (1)
Bee Hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*)	5 (2)	3 (1)	--
Cuban Emerald (*Chlorostilbon ricordii*)	17 (8)	14 (8)	5 (1)
Cuban Trogon (*Priotelus temnurus*)	25 (6)	4 (1)	--

Cuban Tody (*Todus multicolor*)	10 (3)	5 (2)	--
Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*)	13 (6)	13 (9)	--
West Indian Woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliaris*)	25 (8)	14 (6)	--
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)	4 (3)	2 (1)	--
Cuban Green Woodpecker (*Xiphidiopicus percussus*)	10 (3)	5 (2)	1 (1)
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)	3 (2)	3 (3)	--
Fernandina's Flicker (*Colaptes fernandinae*)	--	2 (1)	--
Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*)	--	14 (8)	2 (1)
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)	30 (9)	41 (19)	1 (1)
Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)	3 (3)	3 (3)	--
Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)	--	1 (1)	--
Cuban Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala*)	4 (2)	10 (3)	--
Cuban Parakeet (*Psittacara euops*)	--	175 (2)	--
Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*)	1 (1)	--	--
Cuban Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*)	13 (8)	22 (8)	3 (1)
La Sagra's Flycatcher (*Myiarchus sagrae*)	9 (5)	8 (5)	--
Loggerhead Kingbird (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus*)	14 (8)	15 (9)	1 (1)
Giant Kingbird (*Tyrannus cubensis*)	2 (1)	--	--
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*)	1 (1)	--	--
White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)	3 (2)	2 (2)	--

Thick-billed Vireo (*Vireo crassirostris*)	--	2 (1)	--
Cuban Vireo (*Vireo gundlachii*)	14 (6)	18 (6)	--
Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)	1 (1)	--	--
Cuban Crow (*Corvus nasicus*)	3 (3)	17 (4)	--
Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)	3 (1)	3,503 (2)	--
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)	--	1 (1)	--
Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)	--	50 (2)	--
Zapata Wren (*Ferminia cerverai*)	--	3 (1)	--
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*)	1 (1)	8 (4)	3 (1)
Cuban Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila lembeyei*)	--	5 (1)	--
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*)	1 (1)	--	--
Cuban Solitaire (*Myadestes elisabeth*)	6 (1)	--	--
Red-legged Thrush (*Turdus plumbeus*)	29 (9)	11 (5)	4 (1)
Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)	8 (3)	10 (6)	1 (1)
Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) 1			
Bahama Mockingbird (*Mimus gundlachii*)	5 (1)	1 (1)	--
Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)	31 (10)	52 (15)	2 (1)
American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*)	1 (1)	--	--
Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)	--	1 (1)	--
Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)	3 (1)	5 (2)	--

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)	2 (2)	--	--
Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*)	--	1 (1)	--
Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)	4 (2)	27 (3)	--
Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)	5 (2)	11 (7)	1 (1)
Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*)	1 (1)	1 (1)	--
Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*)	--	--	1 (1)
Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)	9 (3)	30 (5)	6 (1)
American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)	27 (10)	27 (10)	3 (1)
Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*)	--	17 (8)	4 (1)
Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*)	21 (8)	10 (5)	2 (1)
Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*)	3 (3)	1 (1)	--
Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)	--	9 (4)	--
Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*)	3 (2)	11 (6)	3 (1)
Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*)	77 (11)	118 (18)	25 (1)
Olive-capped Warbler (*Setophaga pityophila*)	6 (3)	--	--
Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)	1 (1)	7 (4)	--
Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*)	10 (5)	10 (7)	5 (1)
Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*)	1 (1)	24 (10)	--
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*)	10 (6)	1 (1)	--
Yellow-headed Warbler (*Teretistris fernandinae*)	34 (4)	4 (1)	--

Oriente Warbler (*Teretistris fornsi*)	--	16 (4)	--
Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*)	1 (1)	--	--
Cuban Grassquit (*Tiaris canorus*)	7 (1)	--	--
Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*)	13 (5)	14 (5)	--
Cuban Bullfinch (*Melopyrrha nigra*)	27 (5)	11 (5)	--
Western Spindalis (*Spindalis zena*)	25 (6)	10 (4)	--
Zapata Sparrow (*Torreornis inexpectata*)	--	9 (2)	--
White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)	1 (1)	--	--
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)	2 (1)	1 (1)	--
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)	1 (1)	--	--
Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)	--	--	25 (1)
Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)	--	1 (1)	--
Red-shouldered Blackbird (*Agelaius assimilis*)	--	27 (2)	--
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird (*Agelaius humeralis*)	14 (2)	15 (1)	--
Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)	5 (3)	2 (1)	--
Cuban Blackbird (*Dives atroviolaceus*)	134 (8)	137 (11)	30 (1)
Greater Antillean Grackle (*Quiscalus niger*)	29 (3)	126 (9)	20 (1)
Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*)	7 (1)	--	--
Cuban Oriole (*Icterus melanopsis*)	1 (1)	6 (4)	--
Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*)	1 (1)	--	--

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)	19 (3)	89 (4)	--
Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*)	8 (1)	--	--
Tricolored Munia (*Lonchura malacca*)	54 (4)	4 (1)	--
Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) (post list addition)	1 seen by Joan Becker at Cayo Coco		

See Appendix below:

1 American Pipit on Cuba (Draft January 5 2015)

2 Great White Heron

3 Marabu as Fuel

DRAFT

Michael J. Good, MS
Caribbean Conservation Trust, New Haven, CT, USA
Giraldo Alayon, PhD
Museo Nacional de Historia Naturale de Cuba (National Museum of Natural History of Cuba), Havana, Cuba

First Report of American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) On Cuba

American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens rubescens)* in the family Motacillidae was discovered 17 Km southwest from La Bajada Ranger Station, December 3, 2014 at El Verraco (N 22.55095 W084.37462) on Cabo San Antonio, Guanahacabibes National Park during a yearly Cuban Bird Survey under the auspices of Caribbean Conservation Trust, during an U.S. Government authorized bird survey for Halifax River Audubon of Florida. Cabo San Antonio is the westernmost peninsula in Cuba known as a significant migrant trap for many fall migratory species (MJ Good 2012, Felipe Chaves-Ramirez, 2012) other references) traveling from Florida and the East coast migratory pathway.

Cuba represents over 50 percent of the entire land mass of the West Indies and is a significant stopover and migratory route for North American breeding birds. (Craven and Hall, 2002; Craven BW) According to BirdLife International, which has designated 28 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Cuba, "Over 370 bird species have been recorded in Cuba, including 28 which are endemic to the island and 29 considered globally threatened". Due to its large land area and geographical position within the Caribbean, Cuba represents one of the most important countries for Neotropical migratory birds – both birds passing through on their way south (75 species) and those spending the winter on the island (86 species). This report is the first for AMERICAN PIPIT (Anthus rubescens) verified by Orlando Garrido (Personal Comm.) and Arturo Kirkconnell, co-authors of the Birds of Cuba, as a Cuban National Record.

The American Pipit has recently been recorded from Hispaniola in 2002 (one sight). Sprague's Pipit has also been recorded from Grand Bahamas, Eleuthera and Exuma. Neither species has been reported from Cuba before, although Rafaelle et. al (1998 p. 385) considered that was possible in Cuba.

American Pipit is approximately six to seven inches (15-18 cm) and the size of a large sparrow. It is a slender brown bird of open country with crown and upperparts uniform brown; underparts buff white with black streaks; outer tail feathers white; legs dark/black. American Pipit has a propensity for bobbing its tail and usually walks rather than hops. Sprague's Pipit has a streaked back and yellow legs and seldom bobs its tail.

American (Water) Pipit breeds from northern Alaska, Mackenzie, Canadian Arctic islands, and Newfoundland, south in mountains to California, New Mexico, northern New Hampshire on Mount Washington and Maine on Mount Katahdin. The new England populations represent post-glacial relic Spruce-Fir Krummholz and Subalpine Meadow (Gawler and Cutko 2010) breeding

habitat. They are known to winter across the southern states and north to British Columbia and southern New England, south to Guatemala, southern Mexico including the Yucatan Peninsula, the Gulf Coast, southern Florida but rarely to the West Indies, Bahamas south to San Salvador, Jamaica and Swan, Providencia and San Andres Islands. They have not previously been reported on Cuba. This report verifies what Rafaelle et. al. (1998) suggested that American Pipit utilizes Cuba, the extent of which is not known.

During the breeding season American Pipit prefer Tundra and rocky Arctic and windswept alpine slopes, and alpine meadows. As migrants they utilize sea-beaches, mudflats, wet meadows, sandy areas, pastures, and cultivated fields agricultural land and golf courses during the non-breeding season.

Historic weather patterns for Cuba from November 30 to December 6 included a low pressure system with winds predominately out of the East North East, 24 to 28 km/h with dropping barometric pressure and a Waxing Gibbous to Full moon.

Weather patterns mimicked the migration timeline of detection during our survey and explain the high diversity and numbers of migratory species recorded in some unexpected habitats. There is a 96 hour period of East North Easterlies from Sunday November 30 to Thursday December 4 followed by two smaller breaks in migration indicated by Southwesterly winds with velocities in the single digits. Every location monitored produced unique assemblages of Neotropical species.

The occurrence of undetected northern migrants occurs yearly on the Guanahacabibes Peninsula, but the number of qualified ornithologists birding in this region has been extremely limited to opportunities like those offered through the Caribbean Conservation Trust and the occasional Guanahacabibes National Park surveys. Eco-tours have become an important and popular form of travel (Craven and Hall JCO 16) with many companies including focused birdwatching and clientele with strong bird identification skills allowing the documentation of rare migratory species. The conservation values of these tours are important for documenting the temporal records of birds like American Pipit. This observation represents the first report in the Pinar del Rio province (O. Garrido, pers. Comm.), located in western Cuba.

American Pipit was formerly considered a form of Water Pipit (Bond,1960) of the Old World lineage. During the winter, large flocks gather in open fields typically rising in unison when disturbed and circle to resume their feeding. In the North, the American Pipit feeds on the countless insects at edges of tundra puddles, in alpine meadows it visits unmelted snowbanks feeding on insects. We observed these same behaviors at El Verraco and have photos of this bird feeding on flies and other insects. (Photos 1-4 below)

American Pipit (Anthus rubescens) showing dark legs, buffy belly with streaking to the malar region. A buffy supercillium, thin black eye line with a white thin eye ring. White outer tail feathers were evident in flight (Photos: MJGood).

References

Alauda Rubescens Tunstall, 1771, Ornithol. Br., p. 2. Based on "The Lark from Pennsylvania" Edwards, Glean.Nat.Hist.
2: 185, pl. 297. (Pennsylvania Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Gawler, S and A.Cutko. 2010. Natural Landscapes of Maine: A guide to Natural Communities and Ecosystems. Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Dept of Cons.., Augusta Maine.

J.A.Craven and K.R. Hall 2004. Notable Bird Sightings from Cuba, Winters 2002 and 2003. Journal Caribbean Ornithology Vol. 16 No. 1

Garrido and Kirkconnell 2002, 2010 Aves De Cuba, 2010 Cornell University Press

Acknowledgements

This sighting would not have been possible without the input and participation of the Halifax River Audubon, Joan and Richard Becker, Roy Book, Karl and Linda Brandt, Tad Fyock Kenneth Gunn, David Hartgrove, Fern Murphy, Rachel Ramsey, Robert Randall, Harold and Kirsten Snyder and Meredith Wilson. The authors are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Caribbean Conservation Trust and Gary Markowski. Thanks also to Sr. Orlando Garrido and Arturo Kirkconnell for their valuable contributions.

President Barack Obama Opening Diplomatic Ties with Cuba December 17, 2014

This speech was delivered to the nation just after our return from Cuba on December 13. Many of us will pause to remember the Cuba we left behind and wonder about the Cuba of the future. Below is the speech given by President Obama. A day I will always remember.

Yesterday, after more than 50 years, we began to change America's relationship with the people of Cuba.

We are recognizing the struggle and sacrifice of the Cuban people, both in the U.S. and in Cuba, and ending an outdated approach that has failed to advance U.S. interests for decades. In doing so, we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries.

I was born in 1961, just over two years after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba, and just as the U.S. severed diplomatic relations with that country.

Our complicated relationship with this nation played out over the course of my lifetime -- against the backdrop of the Cold War, with our steadfast opposition to communism in the foreground. Year after year, an ideological and economic barrier hardened between us.

That previous approach failed to promote change, and it's failed to empower or engage the Cuban people. It's time to cut loose the shackles of the past and reach for a new and better future with this country.

I want you to know exactly what our new approach will mean.

First, I have instructed Secretary of State John Kerry to immediately begin discussions with Cuba to re-establish diplomatic relations that have been severed since 1961. Going forward, we will re-establish an embassy in Havana, and high-ranking officials will once again visit Cuba.

Second, I have also instructed Secretary Kerry to review Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism -- a review guided by the facts and the law. At a time when we are focused on threats from ISIL and al Qaeda, a nation that meets our conditions and renounces terrorism should not face such a sanction.

Third, we'll take steps to increase travel, commerce, and the flow of information to -- and from -- Cuba. These steps will make it easier for Americans to travel to Cuba. They will make it easier for Americans to conduct authorized trade with Cuba, including exports of food, medicine, and medical products to Cuba. And they will facilitate increased telecommunications connections between our two countries: American businesses will be able to sell goods that enable Cubans to communicate with the United States and other countries.

Learn more about the steps we're taking to change our policy.

These changes don't constitute a reward or a concession to Cuba. We are making them because it will spur change among the people of Cuba, and that is our main objective.

Change is hard -- especially so when we carry the heavy weight of history on our shoulders.

Our country is cutting that burden loose to reach for a better future. Thank you, President Barack Obama

"Great White" Heron - not just a color morph

Great White Heron *Ardea herodias occidentalis* **By David Sibley**

updated 13 Nov 2007, thanks to all those who have commented publicly and privately. I've backed off a bit from my criticism of the TBRC decision, the more I learn the less clear-cut this seems, although I still think it's at least a good subspecies. Shaibal Mitra sent me a copy of a paper he and John Fritz published in the Kingbird a few years ago, which reaches the same conclusion that Great White Heron is a distinctive subspecies, but points to my book as one of the sources unfortunately labeling the Great White Heron "simply a color morph". Oops, I guess it does. That's not quite what I meant!

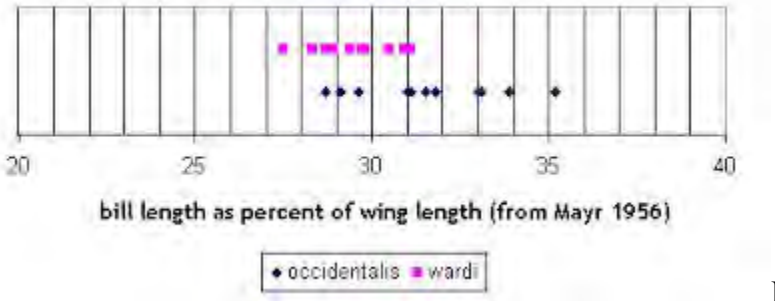
This post is about the debate over whether the "Great White" population of Great Blue Heron is "simply a color morph" (TBRC 2006, Butler 1992), a subspecies (Mayr 1956, Meyerriecks 1957), or a full species (McGuire 2002). A few days ago in the first draft of this post it seemed clear-cut, now with additional information from many sources it seems less so. Much of what I've written here has been said before by Mitra and Fritz (2002) and by Tony Gallucci in 2004 on TexBirds here.

Butler (1992) dismisses the white population with almost no discussion, and unfortunately I labeled this the "white morph" in my field guide (Sibley 2000) even though I recognized that it was more than just a color morph. The Texas Bird Records Committee (TBRC) decided in 2006 to drop "Great White" Heron from the state review list, saying that it seemed to be just a color morph and not a distinct subspecies. This decision was apparently prompted by two records of white nestlings in Great Blue nests in Texas – an old photo from Galveston County (presumably from McHenry and Dyes, 1983) and an unpublished 2006 photo from Aransas County showing a white and dark nestling together in a nest tended by two dark adults!

I am fascinated by these records of white nestlings in Great Blue nests in Texas, but I disagree with the TBRC decision. I have always considered Great White Herons distinctive and I can't accept that this is "simply a color morph". Mayr (1956) did some actual research to confirm that "The Great White Herons are not merely albino specimens of Ward's [Great Blue] Heron, but form a mangrove population in the Key West area which differs from Ward's Heron on the mainland not only by the white coloration, but also by shorter plumes and an average larger bill." (some nice Great White photos are here).

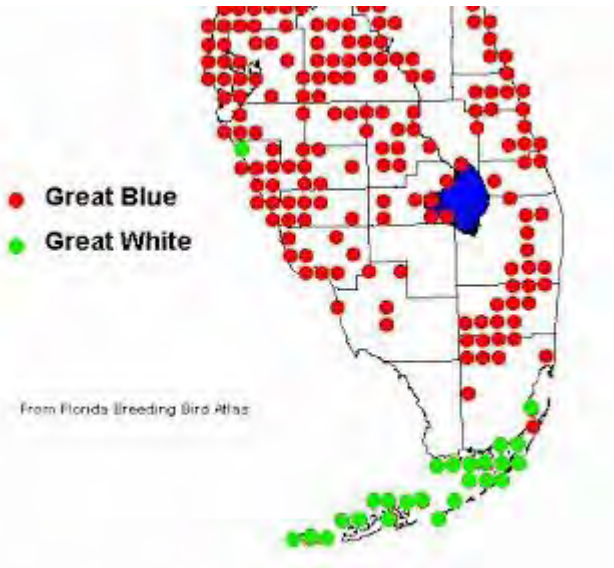
Mayr (1956) and Meyerriecks (1957) studied the white and dark herons of south Florida and found mixed pairs, no clear differences in behavior, and subtle differences in morphology. Zachow (1983) found that measurements of Great Whites are significantly larger than Great Blues from the Florida peninsula, which in turn are significantly larger than Great Blues from farther north. Mayr and Meyerriecks both argue that the "Great White" Heron is not a separate species, but they never question the fact that it is a valid subspecies.

Looking at the measurements from a field ID perspective, however, suggests that they may not be as diagnostic as has been assumed. The following graph shows Mayr's bill/wing data in graphic form. Obviously there is lots of overlap between Great White and Ward's Great Blue from the Florida peninsula, even though there is enough difference for most birders to take away the impression that the Great White is a "much larger-billed" bird.



McGuire (2002) in a more detailed study actually does suggest that "The great white heron appears to be a good biological species". McGuire found that although some mixed dark-white pairs occur in the Florida Keys, there are fewer than would be expected by chance. DNA analysis suggests that the herons of Florida Bay and the Keys are isolated to some extent from the Great Blue Herons of the Florida Peninsula. [McGuire suggests that one possible isolating mechanism is time of breeding, with the peak of nesting in the Keys from October to April, and the nesting season on the mainland beginning in Feb-Mar].

The map below shows the breeding range as recorded in the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas. I added the green color to show the Great White records. Note that the green dot far north on the Gulf Coast represents a solitary Great White among Great Blues. The red dot at the upper end of Key Largo might represent one or more nests of true Great Blue Herons or an intermediate "Wurdemann's-type". Interesting to note on this map is the small but obvious gap between breeding Great Blues and Great Whites.



One of the most interesting facets of this is that the dark birds in the keys are intermediate in

plumage and known as "Wurdemann's Heron". These are found only in the Florida Keys with Great White Herons, and according to McGuire, Mayr, and Meyerriecks all of the dark birds breeding in that area are typical of "Wurdemann's" rather than the mainland subspecies of Great Blue Heron. So when researchers in the Keys report dark-white pairs and also dark-dark pairs with some white offspring, the dark birds are "Wurdemann's" and not typical dark mainland Great Blues. Among nesting colonies in Florida Bay and the Keys, white birds (Great White) outnumber blue (Wurdemann's) about 4:1 (McGuire 2002).

McGuire shows that "dark" birds in the keys are slightly smaller than white ones, but not significantly, and emphasizes that color of dark birds varies continuously from Great-Blue-like but (always?) with more white on the head (photo here) to mostly white with pale gray wings and back, so that it is not possible to classify the non-white birds into subgroups. In size measurements and in DNA the dark birds of the Keys are slightly but not significantly different from Great Whites, but they are significantly different from the mainland Great Blues (McGuire 2002). McGuire takes the color and size difference as evidence that "Wurdemann's" are intergrades, but it would be helpful to know if measurements are correlated with size. That is, are the birds with the most Great-Blue-like plumage in the keys also the smallest? Assortative mating supports the intergrade hypothesis.

I may not go so far as to endorse McGuire's view that the Great White Heron is a separate species, but there does seem to be plenty of evidence that this population is distinctive and at least somewhat isolated. A vagrant outside of the normal range should be identifiable with a high degree of certainty, and Great White and "Wurdemann's" can be reliably distinguished from albino Great Blue Herons.

Birders in Texas and elsewhere should be encouraged to watch for this distinctive subspecies, and the Texas Bird Records committee should put it back on the state review list. That of course reopens the question of what to make of the white nestlings photographed in Texas. They should not be accepted as "Great White" Herons just because they're white. Similarly, their mere existence does not negate the distinctiveness of true Great Whites from the Florida Keys. The true status of those white nestlings will have to remain a mystery for now, awaiting further study.

Questions:
It is interesting that white nestlings have been found twice in Texas but full-grown white birds have been seen very rarely there, and only as brief visitors. We still don't know what these white nestlings look like as adults.

Have white nestlings been found elsewhere in Great Blue nests?

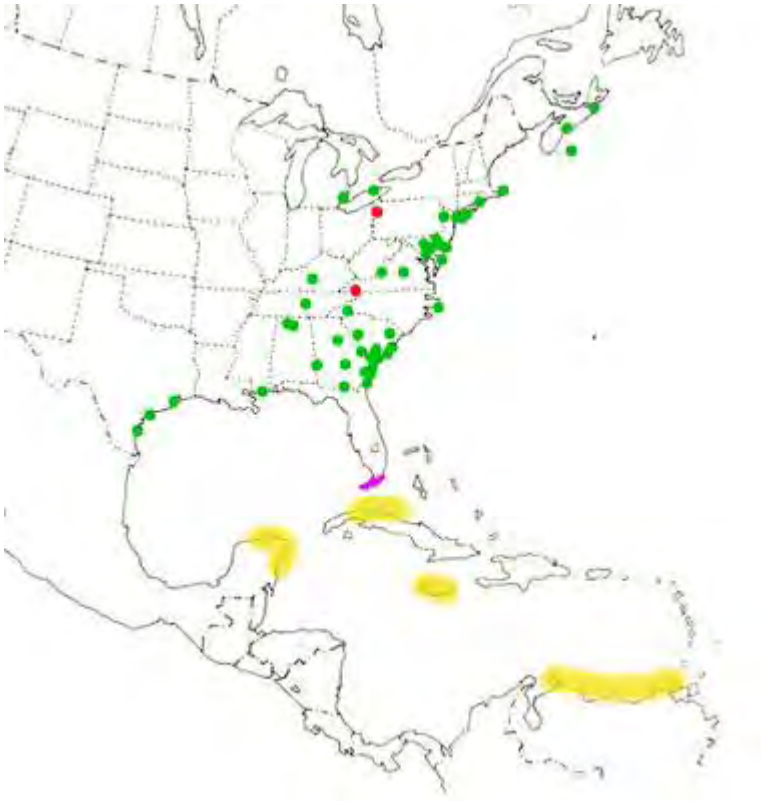
White morph Great Blues are also said to occur in Cuba, Jamaica, the Yucatan, and off Venezuela but are apparently smaller than the Keys birds and scarce (not a majority). What do these birds actually look like and what is their status?

Just how big and short-plumed are Great Whites? I didn't do a thorough search but couldn't find a good set of published measurements. I found no published measurements of head plumes, only the repeated assertion that Great White has shorter plumes. So I can't confirm the identification

features, only that I have the impression that Great Whites are distinctive, and should be more distinctive the farther one gets from Florida (as the size of Great Blues decreases clinally).

Does it make more sense to consider the variable "Wurdemann's" Heron as an intergrade swarm, or simply as the dark morph of Great White Heron – making Great White a dimorphic, large, short-plumed subspecies of Great Blue Heron?

Distribution:
There are isolated records of Great White Heron nesting north to the Tampa area (Bancroft, 1969; Florida Breeding Bird Atlas map), and nonbreeders wander regularly to northern Florida (not mapped) and less often but still regularly to coastal Georgia.



This map shows the resident range (purple), distribution of vagrant records (green), and general areas of reported occurrence outside the US (yellow). The two red dots represent multiple records at a single location, which might be more likely to represent color abnormalities of local Great Blues rather than wandering Great Whites (Pymatuning Lake, PA: three birds in 1938 and another in 1961); South Holston Lake, VA/TN: single bird in fall 1990, 1991, 1994, and 2002). But in general the distribution of records appears consistent with a south Florida origin. On the other hand, Marshall Iliff (pers. comm.) points out that this is a surprising number of vagrant records given that the total breeding population of Great White Heron is under 1000 breeding pairs.

Aberrant "Wurdemann's-like" herons:
A bird photographed in Washington County, PA in 2004 and present every year since then is clearly not a "Wurdemann's" Heron, and likely a Great Blue x Great Egret hybrid.

Another odd bird photographed in MA in Sep 2005 was clearly a leucistic Great Blue based on size and plumage details, and not a "Wurdemann's". (Thanks to M. Rines for the photo)

References:

Bancroft, G. 1969. A great white heron in great blue nesting colony. Auk 86:141–142. pdf here

Butler, Robert W.. 1992 . Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online

Mayr, E. 1956. Is the great white heron a good species? Auk 73:71–77. pdf here

McGuire, H. L. 2002. Taxonomic status of the great white heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*): an analysis of behavioral, genetic, and morphometric evidence. Final Report. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, Florida, USA. pdf here

McHenry, E. N., and J. C. Dyes. 1983. First record of juvenal "white-phase" great blue heron in Texas. American Birds 37:119.

Meyerriecks, A. J. 1957. Field observations pertaining to the systematic status of the great white heron in the Florida Keys. Auk 74:469–478. pdf here

Mitra, S. S. and Fritz, J. (2002) Two Great White Herons (*Ardea (herodias) occidentalis*) in NewYork,Sept-Nov 2001.Kingbird 52 (1):27-34.

Sibley, D. A. 2000. The Sibley Guide to Birds. Chanticleer Press.

Texas Bird Records Committee. 2006. Minutes of Annual Meeting.

Zachow, K. F. 1983. The great blue and great white heron (Aves: Ciconiiformes: Ardeidae): a multivariate morphometric analysis of skeletons. Thesis, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, USA.

Dec. 14 : Hated weed will fuel new energy plant in Cuba

by Brett Gover

Because of its lovely pink and yellow flowers, marabu was once prized in Cuba as an ornamental plant.

Over the past few years, *invasive species* have been the subject of several Weekly Buzz articles. An invasive species is a plant or animal that is not native to a particular ecosystem and that causes, or is likely to cause, economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

One article focused on the growing flocks of wild ring-necked parakeets in and around London, which could bring about declines in native bird species and agricultural production. Another article explored the link between invasive Burmese pythons and a sharp drop in wildlife in Florida's Everglades. A third article discussed the fish called Asian carp, which are thriving in the Mississippi River system and could soon spread to the Great Lakes.

Today's article takes us to the Caribbean island country of Cuba, which is under siege by an aggressive weed native to Africa.

(Find Cuba on this map of Middle America.)

The weed is known by various names, including sickle bush, bell mimosa, Chinese lantern tree, and Kalahari Christmas tree. To scientists, it is *Dichrostachys cinerea* (DY-kroh-STACK-iss sin-AIR-ee-uh). To Cubans, it is marabu (mahr-ah-BOO).

Marabu is a fast-growing, woody plant that can reach a height of around 20 feet. Fierce thorns more than three inches long protrude from its branches. Bark on younger branches is green and hairy, while on older branches it is dark gray-brown and rough.

Perhaps the plant's most notable feature is its fluffy, pleasant-smelling flowers. Several inches long and shaped like bottle brushes, they hang from branches on long stems. The top half of each flower is light pink or purple and the bottom half is yellow.

These attractive flowers are largely responsible for marabu's presence in Cuba. The plant was introduced to the island in the 19th century as an ornamental shrub.

It thrived in Cuba's tropical climate and gradually began to spread. Then, two decades ago, came a development that caused the spreading to accelerate dramatically.

The giant country known as the Soviet Union had long provided Cuba with financial support and mechanized agricultural equipment. Much of this equipment was used in the production of sugarcane, which had been Cuba's top crop since the 18th century. Most of the sugar that Cuba produced was sold to the Soviet Union.

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 spelled disaster for the Cuban sugarcane industry. Many sugar mills closed, and much of the land where sugarcane had been grown was abandoned to weeds.

The weed that claimed most of this land was marabu. It grew in dense thickets that were almost impenetrable. Lacking heavy machinery, most farmers found it impossible to clear the land for new crops.

Marabu now represents one of the greatest problems facing Cuba. The weed covers an estimated 5,800 square miles of farmland. The country, which currently imports 70 percent of its food, desperately needs to make this land productive again.

Part of the problem is that no one has been able to find a use for marabu. It does not make a good building material, and it cannot be used for cooking or heating because it produces too much smoke when it burns.

Last week, however, news sources reported a possible breakthrough in the fight against marabu. A British company called Havana Energy has announced that it is partnering with Cuba's sugarcane industry to build a renewable energy plant in the central part of the country.

The plant will be fueled by sugarcane residue during the harvest of that crop, but for the rest of the year it will be fueled by marabu.

"Marabu has a very high calorific level and low moisture, so as biomass it's very attractive," said Havana Energy's CEO, Andrew Macdonald, in an interview with BBC News. The term *calorific* refers to the amount of potential energy in the weed.

Some of the energy that the plant generates will be used by Cuba's largest sugar mill, and the rest will flow into the country's power grid.

To use marabu as a *biofuel*, or fuel produced from organic materials, Havana Energy must find a way to harvest the weed economically, which no one has so far been able to do. The company plans to bring construction and forestry equipment to Cuba early in 2013 and begin working on this literally thorny problem.

If the company is successful, Cuba will benefit doubly. Not only will it have gained a new source of renewable energy, but its land will gradually be cleared of the weed that has crippled agriculture and that Cubans have come to hate.