

Sunrise Birding LLC JAMAICA

TRIP REPORT

www.sunrisebirding.com

Jan 21-27, 2024

Highlights and Group Favorites

- Crested Quail-Dove on the run!
- Jamaican Tody!
- Both Streamertails! Wow. Just Wow! Jamaican Orioles
- Courting White-tailed Tropic Birds
- Jamaican Blackbird (what views!)
- Jamaican Spindalis
- Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo
- Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo
- Views & White-tailed Tropicbirds!
- The Mask Duck Surprise!
- Café Blue & the "magic tree"
- Starlight Chalet & the full moon

Leaders: Ricardo Miller and Frank Gallo Driver: Andrew Hall

Report & Photos: by Frank Gallo

Total Bird Species: 109 + 3 heard only = **113**!

We Saw all 29 Endemics (2 others are extinct) **plus** the new one about to be added, Large Jamaican (Greater Antillean) Elaenia.



- Rufous-throated Solitaire (incredible views!)
- Our Roosting Jamaican Owl!
- Sneaky Caribbean Doves
- Orangequit!
- Bahama Mockingbird, finally!
- Caribbean Coot (a beautiful subspecies)
- Vervain Hummingbird so tiny.
- Great food & a Wonderful Group!!
- Hope Garden' Parrot & Potoo extravaganza!!
- Section & Dennis's Blue Mountain Coffee!
- The beach walk for Wilson's Plover & pals.



21 Jan, Sunday – Hotel 4 Seasons: Our Sunrise Birding Jamaica Tour began with a welcome dinner in the Hotel 4 Seasons banquet hall at 6 p.m. After introductions, we went over general information and the schedule for the next couple of days. Tomorrow, we head to Hellshire early.

22 Jan, Monday - Hotel 4 Seasons – Hellshire: The group met for breakfast at 06:30. We finished by 6:50



a.m. and gathered again at 07:15 in front of the office. We birded by the office while we waited for the bus and had amazing looks at 2 male Red-billed Streamertails, a male American Redstart, and 3 **White-crowned Pigeons**. We loaded the bus and left at 07:31 right on schedule, arrived in Hellshire at 08:10, and started birding the old Shrimp Factory Road. We quickly found our first target species, Stolid Flycatchers, and watched as the three chased each other around. Several others were seen well near the end of our stay. Next, our second target, Jamaican Mango (15

total) teed up in perfect light for everyone to enjoy. Several folks also had quick looks at Yellowshouldered Grassquits, first two females then a beautiful male that sat briefly in the open! Our third target, Bahama Mockingbird, was a



challenge to find. We had to drive to the small lagoon before we found one. Eventually, we saw two and heard one other. The lagoon hosted two Great Blue Herons and a young Little Blue Heron. Other highlights include incredible views of a **leucistic Turkey Vulture**, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and Antillean Palm Swifts. We finished around 10:30 and went to the Greater Portmore Sewage Ponds.



We arrived at 11:00 and left around noon. The water was high, and they'd

cleared some of the impoundments, so there was lower diversity than expected, but we had very nice looks at an adult Sora close to the edge of the back impoundment, and a first for the tour. They are not common in Jamaica. We saw 3-4 Purple Gallinules, a few Smooth-billed Anis, Yellow-crowned Bishops, Black-necked Stilts, Spotted Sandpipers, and assorted herons and egrets, including a Tricolored Heron.



There were many White-collared Swifts, 4 Cave Swallows, and N. Rough-winged Swallows (new), and a 10ft crocodile!

After a delicious lunch at Sonia's in Kingston, we left for a new site scouted by Ricardo and Frank, hoping for **Masked Ducks.** After a little searching, we found them, a pair tucked in close on the shore. We enjoyed spectacular views of these elusive ducks, before searching the other nearby ponds! A Caribbean Coot showed well across the

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and had dinner at 6:30 p.m., then watched the full moon rise over the mountains. What a great day!

street accompanied by 24 Jacana with several babies in tow. There was quite an assortment of ducks, including Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Ring-necked, and Lesser Scaup, and quite a few Northern Rough-winged Swallows flying around. Smooth-billed Anis sat on the fence and watched us for a bit. What an incredible first day, and our scouting paid off! At 4:11 p.m. we headed back to the Hotel 4 Seasons. We met at 6:30 p.m. for dinner and to do the list.

23 Jan, Tuesday – 4 Seasons – Hope Gardens – Starlight Chalet: Breakfast again at 06:30 a.m. We met with luggage at 07:15 a.m. and left for Hope Gardens at 07:35,

after a bit of birding by the office, arriving at 08:30 after a quick

stop for air and water.

Our first birds at the gardens were a roosting Northern Potoo, and both Olive-throated Parakeets and Yellow-billed Parrots (Photo by Patty Morris) all in the parking

area. We then wandered the gardens for a couple of hours and saw Jamaican Woodpeckers, a variety of migrant warblers, including Cape May, BT Blue, and N. Parula, and an amazing roosting Jamaican Owl! As

we were leaving, Jamaican Euphonias and Yellow-faced Grassquits showed well near the gate.



Our next stop was a productive forest patch in Irishtown just past Cafe Blue/Crystal Edge Restaurant where



we birded until 12:40. The patch produced, our first Arrowhead

Warbler, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, B&W Warbler, Jamaican Elaenia, Jamaican Tody, and Jamaican Oriole. Our lunch back at Crystal Edge Restaurant and Café Blue was delicious. The view from the veranda was lovely and the coffee was great! After lunch, we headed up the mountain to Starlight Chalet, stopping for Ring-tailed Pigeon in a cecropia near the EITS cafe, then on a side road with the



Eleania (a new endemic), Jamaican Bullfinch, Jamaican

Oriole, Jamaican Euphonia, Jamaican Pewee, and lots of Jamaican Spindalises! It was quite a productive stop. We

"magic tree". Here, we had great views of a female Jamaican Becard, Large (Greater Antillean) Jamaican





24 Jan, Wednesday – Starlight – Section – Silver Hill Gap: Dawn was spectacular! Breakfast was at our usual 06:30, and Red-billed Streamertails were everywhere. At least 8-10 were either visiting the feeders or in the



gardens. Our first Sad Flycatcher perched on the veranda railing during breakfast, where everyone got to try ackee with salted cod, and yams. After breakfast, we walked the gardens and saw a Bullfinch,3 Yellow-shouldered Grassquits, our first Jamaican Tody near a nest hole, a Black-throated Green Warbler (uncommon), and enjoyed nice views of a Jamaican Euphonia, and male Spindalis along the driveway. A few folks saw Orangequits and a Common



Ground-Dove in a tree. At 08:20 we left for Section and birded down from there along the road. Highlights included amazing views of a Jamaican Blackbird perched on a tree trunk, a cooperative perched Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo, and good views of a Blue Mountain Vireo which have been scarce lately. We finished the morning sipping Blue Mountain Coffee at Dennis's in Section

while we learned about how they produce their coffee



(see below).

Lunch was back at Starlight Hotel - Chicken Wraps and burgers – where a Jamaican Oriole (Photo by Patty Morris) appeared on the feeder with the Streamertails.



After lunch, we went birding along Silver Hill Gap looking for Quail-Doves, Chestnutbellied Cuckoo, and Solitaire. Several Tody's sat out for us as we walked quietly along the

road. Adriane and Frank found a Giant Anole, and we were all witness to a great gathering of more than 30 Ring-tailed Pigeons feeding in a fruit tree on the hillside. It was a spectacular sight. A few Arrowhead Warblers popped up along the road; one showed well but briefly. Another Blue-Mountain Vireo greeted us by the old water-bottling Quonset hut, where more solitaires were calling. Near the end of the day, a Crested Quail-Dove flew in and walked up the hill from us. Some folks saw it well as it



wandered back and forth before vanishing up the hill. Fortunately, while returning to Starlight, we





stopped for a Crested Quail-Dove on the road that turned out to be a leaf. However, just as we were about to leave, a real one walked out in front of the bus giving everyone incredible views. We trailed it up the road for a while before it flew off. We did the list at 6. Dinner 6:40 p.m. Another great day. < Blue Mountain Coffee at Dennis's in Section ^

25 Jan, Thursday – Starlight – Port Antonio with Stops: We loaded the van at 6:30 and ate breakfast at 6:40. A female Black-throated Blue came into the bar and many Streamertails visited the feeders. We finished loading the bus at 07:15, then walked the gardens to the gate from 07:30-07:50 and had nice looks at a male Black-faced Grassquit by the veranda, and a couple of Jamaican Orioles. We watched 3



Red-tailed Hawks courting and chasing one another overhead, and Greater Antillean Grackles were doing their morning commuting.

After breakfast, we drove to Section where we disembarked, and Andrew drove the bus



up the infamous hill while we strolled behind. We started birding around the corner where we found a Blue Mountain Vireo, 2 Jamaican Blackbirds close, and a Rufous-throated Solitaire that descended the hill to feed on berries in the treetops. Some folks had decent looks. We also called in a Swainson's Warbler from down on a lush steep slope. It came close but we never saw it. We looked hard for Quail-Doves on the "hot corner" and the hillside before the Coffee Depot without success. It started to rain so we headed for the coast at 10:30. We stopped for coffee and a nice lunch at **Blue Patio, a new restaurant**, in Springhill Falls, where we spotted a Sad Flycatcher on a wire. After lunch, we continued to

the coast where 4 Royal Terns were perched in Port Royal Bay. We arrived at San, San at 3:15 where 6 uncharacteristically skittish **Caribbean Doves** on the road finally gave us nice views, and we enjoyed views of a Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo overhead. Several White-eyed Thrushes were heard, and we saw 4 Yellow-billed Parrots, 2 Jamaican Parakeets, 3 Common Ground Doves, and a distant Kestrel at the power cut and Parakeet House. Andrew, Frank,



and Ricardo went breakfast- shopping after dinner for our early morning drive to Hector's River.

26 January, Friday – Hector's River – Ecclesdown Road: We met at 6 a.m. Left at 6:10 and arrived by

07:00 at **Hector's River** by the school/Community Center, right on schedule. Upon arrival, 4 **White-tailed Tropicbirds**



flew by near the scenic cliffs, and we watched



two American Kestrels that were nesting in a hole in a dead snag. After coffee was passed around, we were mesmerized for an hour by the synchronous

courting

flights of 5 pairs of **tropicbirds** and watched another tending a **nest** in the cliffs, before we could pull away for breakfast.



At about 08:30 a.m., we went to the famous Ecclesdown Road, where several groups of distant, Black-billed Parrots flew by



before 3 flew over us in poor light, but close enough to ID. Shortly afterward, we were treated to incredible views of a **Rufous-throated Solitaire** perched at eye-level facing us on a curved vine, and a Rufous-tailed Flycatcher perched in a palm. It started to rain, so we drove for a

bit, stopping when we heard Black-billed Parrots and Jamaican Crows, but we didn't see them. The rain intensified

so we drove further. On our last stop before lunch, we found 3-4 Black-billed Streamertails feeding on distant flame tree flowers.





At 12:10, we continued to lunch at **Boston Jerk** where we devoured a feast of jerked chicken, pork, and sausage. After lunch, we drove back to where we came out of Ecclesdown Road and had a great afternoon of birding. Black-billed Parrots flew in and perched close to the road for us. We met Happy, a local farmer, who gave Ricardo a mace/nutmeg plant, and we opened a fruit and showed it around. Afterward, we watched a male Jamaican Woodpecker excavating a hole in a dead snag and discovered a tree full of warblers, 3 Jamaican Orioles, and several Orangequits. Later, a Chestnut-bellied



Cuckoo put on a great show for us, Yellow-billed Parrots and Jamaican Parakeets flew



over, some of which, landed, and we had amazing views of a roadside Sad Flycatcher. We finished our day with killer looks at a male Black-billed Streamertail facing us in perfect light. Wow!

We arrived back at the hotel at 5:05 and saw a few Smooth-billed Anis and Cave swallows along the way.

Tonight was our last dinner together, so we shared 3 of our most memorable experiences on the tour. It was a wonderful trip! After dinner, we met at the office at 7:45 p.m. and went owling out front and up the hill. We saw a Northern Potoo that perched, calling, at

the end of a dead Cecropia branch, and we heard 2 Jamaican Owls.

27 Jan, Saturday – Bay View Eco Lodge – Castleton Gardens – Pepper Thyme – Airport: We met the



views of Jamaican Parakeets feeding on purple flowers near the office, Green-rumped Parrotlets in the trees across the valley and by the office, and below-eye-level views of a Jamaican Elaenia. We also added Merlin as a trip bird.

After breakfast, we all finished packing and left just before 09:00 for **Castleton Gardens**, where we took a **group photo**, and quickly found **7 Jamaican Crows**, our final endemic for the tour, and watched them feeding on palm fruits above our heads!

group at 6:30 a.m. in front of the office and birded the grounds until 07:20 then went to breakfast. Morning highlights included close



After taking our group photo, we continued to an old tour favorite, **Pepper Thyme Jerk Restaurant**, by the golf course in Kingston for lunch, where we enjoyed one of the best meals of the trip. Christin and

Adriane had an early flight, so they left for the airport with takeout. We all enjoyed a great meal before heading to the airport ourselves, where we had time to go birding along the airport road. Our first stop by some old docks added many Royal and Sandwich Terns, Laughing Gulls, Brown Pelicans, and 2 Sanderling, 3





Turnstones, and 2 Least Sandpipers to the trip list.

We then drove past the airport and walked a trail out to the **beach** where we found 3 Wilson's Plovers, 2 Semipalmated Plovers, 3 Ruddy Turnstones, and 1 Black-bellied Plover, bringing our tour total to 112, a new high count! Yay, team!







Sunrise Birding LLC – Jamaica Tour 21-27 February 2024

Status Codes

E = Endemic Species; **Es** = **Endemic Subspecies**; **Ec** = Endemic Caribbean Species ECs = Endemic Caribbean Subspecies; NEc – Near Endemic Caribbean Species; R = Resident Species; nbR = Nonbreeding Resident; AM = Austral Migrant; M = Migrant; H = heard only; * = New to the tour species list; * = Noteworthy. Jamaican Owl Photo: by Patty Morris

Leaders: Ricardo Miller & Frank Gallo Driver: Andrew Hall

Total Bird Species: 110 seen plus 3 heard only = **113**! A new high total.

Species	Scientific Name	Status	# Days Seen	Max per day	No.
Blue-winged Teal	Spatula discors	М	1	160	1.
Northern Shoveler	Spatula clypeata	М	1	60	2.
American Wigeon	Marcea americana	М	1	8	3.
Ring-necked Duck	Aythya collaris	М	1	5	4.
Lesser Scaup	Athya Afinis	Μ	1	22	5.
Masked Duck*	Nomonyx dominicus	R	1	2	6.
Least Grebe	Tachybaptus dominicus	R	1	1	7.
Rock Pigeon (Dove)	Columba livia	R/I	4	8	8.
White-crowned Pigeon	Patagioenas leucocephala	Ec/Nt	4	11	9.
Ring-tailed Pigeon	Patagioenas caribaea	E	5	46	10.
Common Ground Dove	Columbina passerina	Es	5	13	11.
Crested Quail-Dove	Geotrygon versicolor	Е	1	2	12.
Caribbean Dove	Leptotila jamaicensis	Es	2	6	13.
White-winged Dove	Zenaida asiatica	R	3	12	14.
Zenaida Dove	Zenaida aurita	R	5	21	15.
Mourning Dove	Zenaida macroura	R	2	1	16.
Smooth-billed Ani	Crotophaga ani	R	13	2	17.
Mangrove Cuckoo	Coccyzus minor	R	1H	1	18.
Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo	Coccyzus pluvialis	E	3	1	19.
Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo	Coccyzus vetula	E	2	1	20.
Northern Potoo	Nyctibius jamaicensis	R	2	2	21.
White-collared Swift	Streptoprocne zonaris	R	1	35	22.

Antillean Palm Swift	Tachornis phoenicobia	R	3	4	23.
Jamaican Mango	Anthracothorax mango	Е	2	15	24.
Vervain Hummingbird	Mellisuga minima	Es	4	2	25.
Red-billed Streamertail	Trochilus polytmus	Е	5	24	26.
Black-billed Streamertail	Trochilus scitulus	Е	1	4	27.
Sora*	Porzana carolina	MM	1	1	28.
Common Gallinule	Gallinula galeata	R	1	56	29.
American Coot	Fulica americana	R	1	3	30.
<u>American Coot (Caribbean)</u> *	F. americana c	ECs	1	1	
Purple Gallinule	Porphyrio martinica	R	1	5	31.
Black-necked Stilt	Himantopus mexicanus	R	1	6	32.
Black-bellied Plover (Gray)	Pluvialis squatarola	М	1	1	33.
Killdeer	Charadrius vociferus	R	1	24	34.
Semipalmated Plover*	Charadrius semipalmatus	М	1	2	35.
<u>Wilson's Plover</u> *	Charadrius wilsonia	R	1	3	36.
Northern Jacana	Jacana spinosa	R	1	24	37.
Spotted Sandpiper	Actitis macularius	nbR	1	4	38.
Ruddy Turnstone	Arenaria interpres	М	1	7	39.
Sanderling	Calidris alba	М	1	2	40.
Least Sandpiper	Calidris minutilla	М	1	2	41.
Laughing Gull	Leucophaeus atricilla	R	1	78	42.
Sandwich Tern	Thalasseus sandvicensis	R	1	38	43.
Royal Tern	Thalasseus maximus	R	3	77	44.
White-tailed Tropicbird	Phaethon lepturus	R	1	11	45.
Magnificent Frigatebird	Fregata magnificens	R	2	4	46.
Brown Pelican	Pelecanus occidentalis	R	2	5	47.
Least Bittern	Ixobrychus exilis	R	1H	1	48.
Little Blue Heron	Egretta caerulea	R	1	3	49.
Tricolored Heron	Egretta tricolor	R	1	1	50.
Snowy Egret	Egretta thula	R	1	5	51.
Green Heron	Butorides virescens	R	1	2	52.
Western Cattle Egret	Bubulcus ibis	R	4	91	53.
Great Egret	Ardea alba	R	1	2	54.
Great Blue Heron	Ardea herodias	R	1	2	55.
Glosssy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus	R	1	55	56.
Turkey Vulture	Cathartes aura	R	6	79	57.
Western Osprey	Pandion haliaetus	M/R	1	1	58.
Red-tailed Hawk	Buteo jamaicensis	R	5	3	59.
Jamaican Owl	Pseudoscops grammicus	E	2	2	60.

Jamaican Tody	Todus todus	Е	5	4	61.
Jamaican Woodpecker	Melanerpes radiolatus	Е	5	6	62.
American Kestrel	Falco sparverius	R	1	5	63.
Merlin	Falco columbarius	М	1	1	64.
Black-billed Parrot	Amazona agilis	E	1	7	65.
Yellow-billed Parrot	Amazona collaria	E	3	30	66.
Yellow-billed x Black-billed Parrot	A. agilis x A. collaria		2	1	
Green-rumped Parrotlet	Forpus passerinus	I	2	9	67.
Olive-throated Parakeet (Jamaican)	Eupsittula nana	Es	4	32	68.
Jamaican Becard	Pachyramphus niger	E	4	2	69.
Jamaican Elaenia	Myiopagis cotta	E	1	2	70.
Large Jamaican (Grtr Ant) Elaenia	Elaenia fallax	E	1	1	71.
Jamaican Pewee	Contopus pallidus	E	2	2	72.
Sad Flycatcher	Myiarchus barbirostris	E	4	1	73.
Rufous-tailed Flycatcher	Myiarchus validus	E	2	2	74.
Stolid Flycatcher	Myiarchus stolidus	Es	6	1	75.
Loggerhead Kingbird	Tyrannus caudifasciatus	Es	6	15	76.
Blue Mountain Vireo	Vireo osburni	E	2	2	77.
Jamaican Vireo	Vireo modestus	E	3	6	78.
Jamaican Crow	Corvus jamaicensis	E	1	7	79.
N. Rough-winged Swallow*	Stelgidopteryx serripennis	М	1	13	80.
Cave Swallow	Petrochelidon fulva	R	2	12	81.
European Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	I	1	11	82.
Bahama Mockingbird	Mimus gundlachii	R	1	3	83.
Northern Mockingbird	Mimus polyglottos	R	4	15	84.
Rufous-throated Solitaire	Myadestes genibarbis	R	2	3	85.
White-eyed Thrush	Turdus jamaicensis	E	4	2	86.
White-chinned Thrush	Turdus aurantius	E	4	9	87.
Yellow-crowned Bishop	Euplectes afer	I	1	30	88.
Jamaican Euphonia	Euphonia jamaica	E	3	12	89.
Jamaican Spindalis	Spindalis nigricephala	E	5	20	90.
Jamaican Oriole	Icterus leucopteryx	Es	4	5	91.
Jamaican Blackbird	Nesopsar nigerrimus	E	2	2	92.
Great-tailed Grackle	Quiscalus mexicanus	R	2	10	93.
Greater Antillean Grackle	Quiscalus niger	R	4	12	94.
Ovenbird	Seiurus aurocapilla	М	1	1	95.
Louisiana Waterthrush	Parkesia motacilla	М	1	1	96.
Black-and-white Warbler	Mniotilta varia	М	3	2	97.
Swainson's Warbler*	Limnothlypis swainsonii	secretive	1H	1	98.

Common Yellowthroat	Geothlypis trichas	М	1	2	99.
Arrowhead Warbler	Setophaga pharetra	E	3	4	100.
American Redstart	Setophaga ruticilla	М	6	13	101.
Cape May Warbler	Setophaga tigrina	М	2	5	102.
Northern Parula	Setophaga americana	М	3	7	103.
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Setophaga caerulescens	М	4	5	104.
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Setophaga coronate	М	1	2	105.
Prairie Warbler	Setophaga discolor	М	2	5	106.
Black-throated Green Warbler*	Setophaga virens	М	1	1	107.
Bananaquit	Coereba flaveola	R	6	10	108.
Yellow-faced Grassquit	Tiaris olivaceus	R	2	5	109.
Orangequit	Euneornis campestris	E	4	29	110.
Greater Antillean Bullfinch	Loxigilla violacea	R	4	3	111.
Yellow-shouldered Grassquit	Loxipasser anoxanthus	E	2	3	112.
Black-faced Grassquit	Melanospiza bicolor	R	3	3	113.

Note: <u>Yellow-crowned Bishop</u> is considered "provisional" on eBird so doesn't show in the eBird total.

OTHER ANIMALS	Scientific Name	# days Seen	max per day	NOTES
Small Indian Mongoose	Herpestes auropunctatus	3	1	Common
Brown Anole sps.	Anolis sps.	2	2	Castleton Gardens
Giant Anole	Anolis sps.	1	1	Blue Mountains
Tropical House Gecko	Hemidactylus frenatus ?	2	2	4 Seasons & Bay View
American Crocodile	Crocodylus acutus	2	3	Old Portmore Sewage Pond



Mace/Nutmeg from a farm on Ecclesdown Road