

## St Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov – 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012

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I always fancied going to T&T but it never made top of the list and with more birds being available on mainland S.America it didn't seem to make sense with the higher 'cost per tick'. However, after being overwhelmed in Peru many years ago, a browse through the Wildwings brochure earlier this year finally sealed a much wanted decision to go. Their itinerary is well paced and you can go whenever you like as it doesn't depend on a large group booking with a UK guide. We decided to go end Nov/early Dec as the wet season (in theory!) is over and if you go before 15<sup>th</sup> Dec the cost is much reduced. As the plane went via St Lucia Wildwings changed the itinerary at our request, to include a few days see the endemics. The trip was a great success as we saw most of our targets due, in no small part, to our local guide Kenny whose local knowledge and sharp eyes were invaluable.

### Logistics

We booked a package through Wildwings, thanks go to Sarah-Jane Thompson for her help in sorting everything for T&T out. Bookings for T&T birding holidays have dropped in the last few years, probably due to the economic problems, but this means it is actually a great time to go. We were fortunate to have no other people on our tour so we had Kenny's 6+ seater van all to ourselves, personally I hate large tour groups. As there were 3 of us we shared the single room supplement between us, an extra charge is made if only 2 go. The whole 18 day trip in total averaged £2900 each, including beers and some duty free.

The wildwings package cost was £2400 each, (inc an extra £100 for the BA flight supplement for St.Lucia).

We sorted out the St Lucia bit ourselves staying for 3 nights at the excellent Fox Grove Inn on the east side of the island close to the main birding areas. It made no sense to me to stay in Castries as it's a long drive from the international airport and a long drive back the next morning to the rainforest! To get around we decided to hire a 4wd from Holiday Autos, whilst this was useful it's certainly not essential for the sites we went to. A local driving licence needs to be bought, \$20US, when hiring but it's not much shared 3 ways. The Toyato Rav four wheel drive with aircon, 4 doors, cost £67 a day including no excess to pay if we damaged it, shared 3 ways.

### Accommodation

**St Lucia**, Fox Grove Inn, Mon Repos – 3 nights. <http://www.foxgroveinn.com/>  
\$157 US each for 3 nights, a nice twin en suite, and double room.

Fantastic place to stay, perfect for birders and even some long suffering spouses! It's a fairly small place set in the eastern hills with great views to the sea, the co-owner Esther, Swiss, is a very friendly lady. The rooms are pleasant, most have a fantastic balcony view over the pool and beyond. The Fox Grove is famous on the island for its food and I can certainly vouch for its great quality. The only slight downer was the service was usually very dour, it was usually up to us to get a smile out of the waitress, occasionally an independent smile did happen though. We later realised this is a fairly common trait amongst the Caribbean's, certainly wouldn't get away with it in the UK.

Its location is perfect for birders being half hour from the Des-Cartiers rainforest trail and 5 mins from the White-breasted Thrashers it couldn't have been placed better! No long drive to the airport either so lazed around the pool on our last morning.

**Trinidad** – booked through Wildwings

Pax Guesthouse – 7 nights.

An old converted monastery set in the hills above the urban sprawl of Trinidad, certainly a quirky place. The owners Gerard and Oda are extremely friendly and couldn't do enough to help us despite the place being full while we were there.

I have mixed thoughts regarding the Pax guesthouse but overall, like Bill Oddie, would recommend to other birders:

Its location is superb you can wander out the doors and be seeing top quality birds within minutes but because of the awful Trinidadian traffic it takes ages to go anywhere else and with the 7.30 breakfast you can't get to many sites before 8.30!

The rooms are cramped but ok, we had the twin with bathroom locate on the lower floors. A load of Canadian Church volunteers had taken over the top floor and because of the old wooden floors we could hear every clunk, clatter and bang☹

Dinner is an ok buffet, as buffets go, and is served at exactly 7.30 and was announced by Gerard the 'man with the gong'. Breakfast is served at exactly 7.30 and is v.good, omelette or scrambled eggs, loads of fruit and toast but not so good if you plan to go out earlier and have their early-breakfast tray, which is only a small bowl of cereal with UHT milk, a banana and a kettle to make tea/coffee. The lunches and packed lunches were always excellent.

Asa Wright – 3 nights

Set deep in the Northern range above Arima, by the Blanchisseuse Road, its reputation is enough to draw most birders here. The Wildwings itinerary includes 3 nights here to ensure an Oilbird trip, it's far more expensive than the Pax, but as compensation their complementary rum punches are much bigger! Its location in the hills is clearly good for forest birding but offers no extra benefit to the Pax if going anywhere else, this time due to the long twisty approach road.

Our 2 comfortable rooms were in a quiet bungalow just by the main building with the famous veranda. Lunch and dinner are again buffet style with mixed reviews from other guests. I discovered that you could swap for a fresh made burger or sandwich using their own bread baked that morning – a great choice!

Mark and I had more bites here than ever experienced before. I had ant bites on the belly mossy bites everywhere and those effing chigger bites on the ankles. Damn nasty bites that swell into fluid filled balloons which, when burst, itch like hell!!! Simon kept talking going on about his relatively few bites were as a direct result of taking vitamin B supplement and marmite, though most likely some luck and his 10% deet soaked shoes, socks, and trousers.

**Tobago** – Blue Waters hotel, Speyside – 4 nights

Set on its own sandy beach this is the perfect place to end a trip, I can still hear those waves just yards from the room, paradise. It's a twisty hour 15min drive to the place but it's definitely worth it. Rum punch here though costs a fortune!!

Best rooms of the trip, a twin with 2 double beds and views over to Little Tobago. The food is always good, the hotel was about £40 each per person per night B&B. The first night we went to the recommended Jemma's in Speyside but the dour Caribbean service reared its ugly head big style. The most miserable looking woman I've ever seen grunted at us and dumped our dinner on the table without a single pleasantry. Food was good though, we later discovered that most of the waitresses had gone to the Blue Waters for more pay.

Tobago, unlike oil rich Trinidad, relies on tourism for revenue and as such people are pushy when it comes to getting your business. There are boat guys that hang around the hotel every day that jump on you the moment you step out of your taxi, as with other countries (eg India) firmness was the order of the day when dealing with them. Our taxi driver, Andy, is a scammer (he said himself how he loved scammer programmes and how fallible people are), he tried to get Simon to buy stuff in the shop for him 'as a tip' by putting his supermarket shopping in his basket and never stopped trying to get us to book one of his tours, safe to say we made sure we had a different driver back to the airport!

## **Birdguides**

St Lucia – Stephen Lesmond

Stephen can be contacted by Esther (Fox Grove), his charge of \$80 caribbean for the day is very reasonable and I can certainly recommend using him to get the endemics. He has a sidekick, Melvin (the laid back Rasta hippy), who he uses when he's busy, also a v.good guide but doesn't use bins at all, not that it mattered much. They don't provide transport. Other guide(s) on the island are expensive at \$85US+ per person per day (inc car), most work for the forestry commission.

#### Trinidad – 'Big' Kenny

Booked through the Wildwings package, he guided each day while we stayed at the Pax. Kenny is an extremely friendly, easy-going guide with superb knowledge of Trinidad and seems to know every other person as we drive along. He's been doing these tours for years and has intimate knowledge of all the birds (not just the feathered ones!) and was great for us as he allowed us to modify, slightly, the itinerary to suit our target list. At first I was worried when he rolled up at 8.30 to the Pax and said this was 'the norm' but after a chat he said early starts were possible, when needed, and sure enough he was there at 5am for our (unsuccessful) Piping-guan bid. He is extremely sharp at getting the tough to see birds and gives great directions but does, however, struggle walking up hills after a few too many rums over the years (he does own a liquor store☺).

#### Tobago – Newton George

Sarah, Wildwings, contacted Newton for us and he met us at the Blue Waters on our first day there. We did his trip to the Gilpin Trace, where he got us all but one target on a rain soaked morning - \$60US each. Mark did the round the island tour the next day and said the morning was enjoyable but the afternoon dragged as he drove along the twisty east coast without many stops - \$85US each. I had bad guts and Simon went over to Little Tobago again. Newton is an excellent guide and unsurprisingly knows all the islands birds, however he books as many people as possible on his trips and they follow a set schedule. After Trinidad I think it would be easy enough to 'clear the island' in one shot, Gilpin in the morning and the southern bits in the afternoon. He does have one ace up his sleeve - his garden. His wife has turned it into a hummingbird paradise and, for \$5 + \$2 taxi, you can enjoy it too.

#### Literature

Various Surfbirds trip reports

Helm field guide to Birds of Trinidad and Tobago – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Martyn Kenefick

A birder's Guide to Trinidad & Tobago by William Murphy

Helm Birds of the West Indies (for St.Lucia)

#### St Lucia 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov – 26<sup>th</sup> Nov

Our BA flight landed on time at Hewanorra airport, we had been following a Virgin flight across the Atlantic so our captain told us to hurry over to customs but even so there was a long queue to get through. After we jumped the queue, sneaking through the local channel, we were met by the Hire Car Rep and taken to some ramshackle outpost to pick up our Holiday Autos 4wd car along with bald tyre and scrapes but hey this is the Caribbean! We were soon at the Fox Grove and had ticked the **Carib Grackle**.

#### Birding Sites visited

Quillesse Forest Reserve – Des Cartiers trail.

Signposted from the main road but then, if you don't have a guide, you're left to guess where to go until the last turning. Just over half an hour after breakfast we arrived at the car park and the trail head. The well maintained trail leads off into the forest and we followed it until the shelter, it carries on to the other side of the island. Birding was quiet but our guide, Melvin, soon pulled out a **St Lucia Oriole** with his pissing. We spent a few hours by the shelter before returning back to the hotel still missing a couple of key targets – **Rufous-throated Solitaire**, **St Lucia Pewee** and a perched **St Lucia Parrot** but plenty of flight views. Returned the next morning with Stephen Lesmond and got **Rufous-throated Solitaire**, **St Lucia Pewee** and a perched **St Lucia Parrot**, in the process clearing all our targets. Was misty first morning so we didn't rush

there the next day, Stephen said as long as it wasn't too hot a really early start is not essential here. Deet is very useful here, I got multiple bites on my legs.

Roadside stop just north of Praslin (c1km), before derelict resort.

This area has been hammered by an unfinished tourist development no doubt affecting the thrasher numbers, from what Stephen said the owners went bust when Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. We pulled up at a small path leading to a short clearing and Melvin immediately found 4 **White-breasted Thrashers** which showed extremely well close to and weren't particularly weary of us. The other highlight here was **3 St Lucia Black-finches**.

Mamiku Botanical Gardens nr Praslin

A short, pleasant, afternoon stroll got us a few **Spectacled Thrushes**, **Zenaida Doves** and Simon saw a **Green-throated Carib**. It had closed early but we just walked in and birded the gardens in the late afternoon.

Jade Mountain Resort

Spent Sunday afternoon driving over to Soufriere to get views of the Pitons, ended up at the luxurious Jade Mountain Resort. **Brown Boobies** and **Mag Frigatebirds** in the bay, had great views of **Green-throated Carib** in the grounds.

### **Bird List**

We came to St Lucia to look for the endemics + other possible lifers. We didn't go out of our way to run up a big list and saw 38sp total. Cleared the targets in a day and a half, spent the rest relaxing and doing some sightseeing to the Pitons.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* - Common

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* – Singletons around airport

Great Egret *Ardea alba* – 2 near airport

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* – 20+ in Soufriere bay

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* - 3 in Soufriere bay

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – 1 drifted over the Fox Grove on our first evening there

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* – Fairy common, saw a few 'Chicken Hawks' over the Fox Grove

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* – Regular along the roadside

Rock Dove (i) *Columba livia feral*

Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita* – A couple seen in the Mamiku Botanical gardens

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina* – 2 in Jade Mountain Resort car park

**St. Lucia Parrot** *Amazona versicolor* – 20+ mostly pairs seen flying past the viewpoint along the Des Cartiers trail. On our 2<sup>nd</sup> morning there we had one perched low in a tree by the path, great views.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* – Good view of one showing well along the Des Cartiers trail

**Lesser Antillean Swift** *Chaetura martinica* – Pretty much always in view from the lookout along the Des Cartiers trail, never came particularly close

**Purple-throated Carib** *Eulampis jugularis* – A common bird at the Des Cartiers lookout, fantastic close views

**Green-throated Carib** *Eulampis holosericeus* – Simon had one at Mamiku Botanical Gardens, another seen well at the Jade Mountain resort

**Antillean Crested Hummingbird** *Orthorhynchus cristatus* – Common along the Des Cartiers trail, Fox Grove and Botanical gardens

**Caribbean Elaenia** *Elaenia martinica* – A couple seen at the pull in just north of Praslin

**St Lucia Pewee** *Contopus latirostris* – 1 eventually seen well by the Des Cartiers trail after many heard

Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* – Very common

**Lesser Antillean Flycatcher** *Myiarchus oberi* – Only 1 seen on our first walk along the Des Cartiers trail

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – Seen as we drove past the airport

**White-breasted Thrasher** *Ramphocinclus brachyurus* – 4 of these much wanted rarities were seen immediately when we walked along a small path going into the dry forest. They hung around for us for a few minutes before disappearing.

**Scaly-breasted Thrasher** *Allenia fusca* – Up to 6 birds around the Des Cartiers lookout, took some patience but they showed well eventually

Pearly-eyed Thrasher *Margarops fuscatus* – 2 seen at the Des Cartiers lookout, bluey/white not yellow (Scaly –b) eyes

**Grey Trembler** *Cinclocerthia gutturalis* – 2 at at the Des Cartiers lookout seen well both mornings, another 2 at the Mamiku Botanical Gardens

**Rufous-throated Solitaire** *Myadestes genibarbis* – Last gasp effort with this one after hearing them loads of times along the Des Cartiers trail, Stephen managed to whistle 2 in and we had prolonged close views, v.smart

**Spectacled (Bare-eyed) Thrush** *Turdus nudigenis* – 2 seen at the Mamiku Botanical Gardens

**Antillean Euphonia** *Euphonia musica* – We did very well with these to draw in 2 birds that fed in mistletoe right by the Des Cartiers trail at head height! Simon managed some video footage.

**St. Lucia Warbler** *Setophaga delicata* – Brief views in the canopy of a bird along the Des Cartiers trail. Went to a clearing in the dry forest north of Praslin where Melvin whistled in a cracking bird for good views

**St. Lucia Oriole** *Icterus laudabilis* – Virtually the first bird we saw was one of these uncommon birds that Melvin whistled in, along the Des Cartiers trail, for great views

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* - common

**Carib Grackle** *Quiscalus lugubris* – Very common

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* - Abundant

Black-faced Grassquit *Tiaris bicolor* – A couple in rank grass by the road north of Praslin

**Lesser Antillean Bullfinch** *Loxigilla noctis* – Very common and often tame

**St. Lucia Black Finch** *Melanospiza richardsoni* – Didn't look too hard for these in the rainforest, luckily we had 2m and 1f showing well in the dry forest just after the thrashers showed. Obviously different to the Bullfinches

**Lesser Antillean Saltator** *Saltator albicollis* – Just one quiet bird showed at the White-b-thrasher site

## **Wildwings package to Trinidad and tobago**

**Trinidad** 26<sup>th</sup> Nov – 6<sup>th</sup> Dec

**27<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Mt St Benedict - Pax

The road above the Pax is a great introduction to Trinidadian birding, many of the common birds are present with a few goodies mixed in. In the morning we walked up to the point where the path into the forest starts but without deet didn't venture too far along it. Highlights were our first of many **Yellow Orioles**, **Tropical Mockingbird**, **Zone-tailed Hawk** at breakfast!, **Barred Antshrike** – pair, **Rufous-b Wren**, agitated **Long-billed Gnatwren**, **Golden-fronted Greenlet**, **Trinidad Euphonia**, **Boat-billed Fly**. Raptors were always

present, mostly **Black Vultures** but always worth looking up to check, we found perched female **Merlin** in large tree by Pax, **Short-tailed Hawk** – 1 dark and 1 light, **Common Black Hawk** – 2. At 3pm we went back up the road armed against chiggers and went a few hundred yards along the path. On the way up we saw **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, a rare **Yellow-bellied Seed-eater** with 2 juvs, hummers included females of **Black-throated Mango**, **Tufted Coquette** and **Blue-chinned Sapphire**. Once in the forest we found an obliging **Cocoa Woodcreeper**, **Golden-crowned Warbler** and best of all our only **White-bellied Antbird** of the trip which showed well after 10 mins of effort. **Tropical Parula** and **Yellow-bellied Elaenia** were seen on the way down, the Tropical Screech and Ferruginous Pygmy Owl stake outs yielded nothing.

**28<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Aripo Livestock Station – Nariva Swamp

Arrived at c9.00 but this didn't seem to affect the birding, there is a security gate but just mention you're birding and they let you through without any problems. Within minutes we were watching gorgeous **Red-breasted Blackbirds** and **White-headed March-tyrants**. A kettle of 400+ Black Vultures drifted over just as the heavens opened, when it rains it really rains, apparently the wet season has extended into Jan the last couple of years. Once we had dried off we were soon ticking off more birds, 4 long legged **Savannah Hawks**, **Pied Water-tyrants**. Kenny spotted a distant **Pinnated Bittern** but it wasn't very satisfactory, luckily a few mins later Mark found one close to the track which showed extremely well for c30mins, Simon got some good video footage. By the cowsheds Kenny found a singing **Ruddy-breasted Seed-eater**, a rare bird nowadays due to trapping as cagebirds, apparently the security guards do the trapping! Also saw **Grassland Yellow-finch**, **Solitary & Least Sandpipers** and **4 Yellow-chinned Spinetails**.

We drove to Nariva swamp for some afternoons birding stopping at Manzanilla Beach for a peaceful lunch/siesta – Not! Hundreds of Indians had decided to spend lunch there too, apparently one of their festivals was taking place. Off shore we saw a few **Brown Pelicans**, **Frigatebirds** and a **Least Tern**.

At 2pm we drove down to the swamp seeing **c10 Yellow-headed Caracaras** in the coconut palms. We stopped just beyond where the road crosses over the bridge and goes into the mangroves. Simon spotted a cuckoo low in the mangroves, good views showed it was a **Little Cuckoo**, a difficult one to find. This is Kenny's spot for **Bicoloured Conebill** and we were soon watching a couple of these and an **American Redstart**. Looking along the road I noticed a small raptor perch up, once we had the scopes set up we had great views of a **Pearl Kite** – another bird that's easy to miss. We drove further down the road and turned off the main road through some small farmsteads into the southern part of the swamp finding 1 light and 1 dark phase **Long-winged Harrier**, perched **Grey Hawk**, **Savannah Hawks**, **Pied Water-tyrants** and **Southern Lapwings**. The road went over a small bridge and Kenny said we should walk along the next couple of hundred yards, he'd seen Azure Gallinule there a few weeks previous. No chance we thought so off we went and we got to the end where a fisherman stood we decided to go back when a bird flushed right by the road – an **Azure Gallinule**! This was followed immediately by its mate and we had good views of one trying to hide in the reeds, yet another tough one seen. Kenny had been searching for Pigeon peas in blossom as there is a rare hummer round here but despite his search we found none, however he did say that they are occasionally seen in the numerous small purple flowers (can't remember the name) that line some of the road. After seeing a few **Yellow-crowned Parrots** and false alarm **Copper-rumped's** a different hummer made an appearance – a female **White-tailed Goldenthrroat**. A brilliant end to a great days birding! A **Lesser Nighthawk** was seen by the coconut palms on the drive back.

**29<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Arena Forest – Waller Field – Heights of Aripo

Arrived at Arena c8am and parked up just beyond last house, spent the rest of the morning slowly walking up the track, under-birded according to Kenny. Some great birds on offer: **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Streaked Xenops**, female **Trinidad Euphonia**, **Sooty Grassquit** - pair drinking from roadside puddle, great views of 2 male **Green-backed Trogons** and soon after a male **Violaceous (Guianan) Trogon**, **Little** and **Rufous-breasted Hermits**, male **White-bearded Manakin**, soaring **Grey-headed Kite** and **Yellow-breasted Flycatcher**. As the track reaches an area of damaged trees I noticed an American warbler actively feeding in trees just above the road, the bluey upperparts, double wing bars, slight white supercilium, some black streaking on the flanks identified this as only the **2<sup>nd</sup> ever Cerulean Warbler** for T&T !!! I dutifully submitted the record to Martyn Kenefick, the chairman of the T&T Rare birds Committee. Flushed with success we carried on up the road finding a roosting **Common Pottoo**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, **Forest Elaenias**. Kenny took us along a sidetrack in search of the target **Black-crested Antshrike**, a short blast from his i-phone

immediately brought in a pair. Further along a **Double-toothed Kite** was spied in the canopy which explained all the agitated birds. Back along the road a **Yellow-olive Flycatcher**, **Squirrel Cuckoo** and another **Jacamar** were seen before we headed back to the Pax for lunch.

Kenny was worried as we approached Waller Field, it's no longer guaranteed that you can get in, just depends on which guards are on duty. Kenny however charmed the female guard easily and we were soon watching half a dozen **Sulphury Flycatchers** and he easily found us the main target – **Moriche Oriole** which just sat by in a tree for 30mins showing well.

We gambled that we would see the White-tailed Nightjars later in the trip (on Tobago) and were soon off again, this time up the windy road to the Heights of Aripo for another target – **Striped Cuckoo**. Kenny fired off a short blast of the call and with his sharp eyes got us all on a bird sat deep in a bush right by the road, easy really! It was dark as we drove back and a couple of **Paraques** were sat on the road.

### 30<sup>th</sup> Nov – Blanchisseuse Road

Left the Pax at 5am for a shot at the Piping-guans which are occasionally seen high up along the Blanchisseuse road. We decided against doing the long drive over to Grand Riviere as Kenny's local contact had said they were only infrequently seen at this time of year (later on our trip a couple went to G.Riviere, leaving at 3am and failed to see any Guans). We arrived at 6am to fog and rain, ugh, and unsurprisingly no sign of any Guans. Kenny drove up to the radio station and bizarrely a male **Collared Trogon** was sat on the fence hunting for insects in the fog. Other birds here included a pair of confiding **Golden-olive Woodpeckers**, male **Hepatic Tanager**, **N.Waterthrush**, **House Wren** and a **Sooty Grassquit**. The weather improved as we went over the top and started down towards the sea. Kenny was looking for a particular tree called Trema, with v.small fruit and once he found it we waited and found some great birds: **Olive-striped Flycatcher**, **Ochre-breasted Flycatcher**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and a great **Speckled Tanager**. The sky was clearing and a look up found a close **White Hawk** flying over, **Common Black Hawks** and a **Grey-headed Kite**. Many swifts were seen but only in good light and when they turned could we be sure of any **Band-rumped Swifts**. An orange flowering tree, Immortelle, was alive with hummers: **White-chested Emeralds** and **Copper-rumped**s while along the road were a few **Cocoa**, **White-necked Thrushes** and a **Euler's Flycatcher**. At another stop we called in a **Stripe-breasted Spintetail** for great views. Hanging around the same spot produced some great birds: male **Red-crowned Ant-tanager**, **Plain-brown Woodcreeper**, **5 White-flanked Antwrens**, good view of **Little Hermit** and 2 more **Speckled Tanagers**. We only heard the Black-faced Ant-thrush despite a few goes at calling it in.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Dec – Point Pierre Wildfowl Trust – Orange Valley – Carina Swamp

Woke up to a horrendously wet/misty day, but despite this we felt optimistic for the day ahead as we weren't particularly doing forest birding. A long drive down to Point Pierre found us there early – 10am, opens at 11. Kenny picked up the lady with the keys and we headed through the refinery to the wildfowl trust. It absolutely pissed down for over an hour and a half so all our birding was done from the comfort of the info centre. **Cocoa** and **Spectacled Thrushes** were common, **3 Yellow-hooded Blackbirds**, **3 Red-capped (Masked) Cardinals** were of note on the bird table. The main bird, an uncommon **Streak-headed Woodcreeper**, suddenly turned up in a tree right by the centre and showed well – lucky with that one. **Fork-tailed Palm** and **Short-tailed Swifts** were over the centre most of the time. With the rain showing no sign of stopping we headed over to Orange Valley to see what waders we could find over lunch. There were plenty of birds on show but the rain put a dampener (literally) on things. We saw our first **Scarlet Ibises** here but the real show for those would be later. The best bird was an imm **American (Caribbean) Flamingo**, a rare bird in T&T and my last Flamingo sp.

It was still too early for the boat trip so in the early afternoon Kenny took us to one of his stakeouts in the southern part of the swamp, the locals seem to use this area as their rubbish dump a real shame. However the birds are still there and we extracted a calling **Red-rumped Woodpecker**, **American Redstart**, **Bicoloured Conebills**, **Green Kingfisher** and **White-winged Becard**. After previous failed attempts Kenny hit the jackpot with a fantastic female **American Pygmy Kingfisher** that posed v.well for us.

The boat into the Caroni swamp leaves at 4pm and takes around 2 hours, arriving early we had a look around the car park area, Kenny found us **7 Green-rumped Parrotlets**, tiny things hard to pick out from the

leaves. Our boat guide, Kenny's friend, Shawn, is well known for his knowledge of the swamps birds and he got us front row seats on our packed boat. Surprisingly the large Japanese group were v. quiet and we were soon watching our first of **2 Straight-billed Woodcreepers** after just 15mins. He made a special effort to find us the birds and came up trumps with an unexpected **Boat-billed Heron** up in the canopy. A staked **Common Potoo** caused much Japanese excitement and the final tick came with a couple of brief, high up, **Green-throated Mangos**, then the show began! The famous **Scarlet Ibis** roost was absolutely fantastic with roughly 800 birds coming into roost with many hundreds of **Snowy Egrets** and 10s of **Little Blue & Tricoloured Herons**. It was all the better with the sun at our back and the threatening black clouds giving us a great backdrop to the spectacle.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dec** – Theo's Hummer garden in St Joseph

Woke up to a cloudy but dry morning, we had saved the mouth-watering prospect of Theo's Yerette garden until our last day with Kenny, with up to 13 sp of hummer it's a must if you want to see the majority of them. Theo lives in a large house up in the hills above the urban sprawl in an area called St Joseph, this position allows him to attract hummers from the lowlands and highlands. He has many groups visiting so it's advisable to ask Oda to book a time at his garden which costs \$25US (inc food/drink) – we got the 8am slot. When you get there it literally takes your breath away, there are 100's of hummers feeding constantly from the many feeders, Theo gets through sack loads of sugar each week. He does an intro speech, difficult to concentrate though!! He also gives what I thought would be a c15min talk but it lasted nearly 40min – you need to consider v. carefully about doing this. Whilst it was interesting and he has many cracking photos you are constantly aware that you're missing out on the real thing just behind you! Also it came as a surprise that we were asked to leave at c10.30 so he could get ready for the next group, we thought we had until 12. We saw 13 sp of hummer that morning!!!! I still buzzing now, Simon got some good video footage.

- Copper-rumped – c500**
- White-chested – 150+**
- White-necked Jacobin – 50+**
- Blue-chinned Sapphire – 150+**
- Green-throated Mango – 1male**
- Black-throated Mango – 80+**
- Brown Violet-ear – 2**
- Tufted Coquette – 1male**
- Ruby-topaz – 6!**
- Rufous-breasted Hermit – 6**
- Little Hermit – 1**
- Green Hermit – 1**
- Long-billed Starthroat – 4**



In the afternoon we went back up the Mt St Benedict road above Pax without Kenny. Most of the birds we had seen previously but we went further into the forest along the monastery donkey track this time. The track is there to service the water supply pipe to the monastery and Pax Guesthouse. A hundred or so yards beyond a dodgy old suspended concrete boardwalk with an alarming drop below, I heard a song, didn't recognise it so just randomly played the call of a leaf-tosser and sure enough that is what we could hear. A scan into the leaves on the opposite bank found us watching a **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser** tossing leaves! Very difficult bird to see so I was surprised when I played the call that another bird, likely the male, suddenly appeared right by us and got very angry! Cracking views for a few mins before we left him alone.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec – Asa Wright

Bounced our way up to Asa Wright in some old non air-conditioned rickety van, would have thought they could do better the price they charge! We thought we would spend this afternoon attempting to get views of a Bellbird so off we went down the Bellbird trail. The trail had seen better days and the only birds we saw were a **Golden-olive Woodpecker** and some **Violaceous Euphonias**, we mainly were watching our footing. Eventually the path finishes at the Discovery trail just below the centre! After some neck ache a **Bearded Bellbird** appeared just above my head and screamed 'BOK!!', and once we had calmed down we had good views. Walking back up to the centre we had cracking views of a pair of **Great Antshrikes** and at least 6 male **Golden-headed Manakins** were at the lek. The same set of common birds we had at lunch time were at the feeders when we got back later, it seemed to be this way for the 3 days we were there. In the evening just as the sun set we had cracking views of **4 Short-tailed Nighthawks** hunting right in front of us along with loads of bats.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Dec – Asa Wright – Waller Field

Up early and straight to the veranda with the usual species present on the feeders, the main birds of note were **3 Scaled Pigeons** flying past, only ever saw these early on. Our Oilbird walk was today at 8.30, they make sure it's done before the big tour groups turn up, there were only 6 of us on the walk. Birding was quiet along the route and we saw around 30 of the unique **Oilbirds** at their nests. On our walk back we hung around the top of the discovery trail and had a few good birds: **Yellow-breasted Flycatcher**, **Lineated Woodpecker** – pair, **Green-backed Trogon**, **Great Antshrike** – pair, **Little Hermit**, **Ochre-bellied Flycatcher**, male **Tufted Coquette**

As we had opted not to go to Grand Riviere and gave Kenny Sunday afternoon off he generously gave us a bonus trip to a site in the south of Waller Field that he knows holds Tropical Screech Owl. At around 3.30 Kenny arrived and off we went firstly to Arena forest where he had seen a Short-tailed Pygmy Tyrant that we had dipped, no luck though. We did see our best views of **Channel-billed Toucan** here and female **Sooty Grassquit**. On the way to Waller Field Kenny was saying how the Macaws seem to have gone from their traditional roost sites when he suddenly pulled over and within moments we were watching a pair of **Red-bellied Macaws** in a roadside Moriche palm. 4 more came to join them and we had great views. We waited for darkness along a bumpy track on the south side of Waller field, seeing **6+ Yellow-rumped Caciques**, **Moriche Oriole** and close perched **White Hawk**. Once dark enough a burst of the owl call was played and we got a response. It took a while to find but again with Kenny's excellent vision we had great spotlight views of a **Tropical Screech Owl**. Simon had stayed back at Asa Wright as he needed to be close to the loo! and heard **Oilbird** from the veranda and saw **Channel billed toucan** perched up.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Dec Asa Wright

The veranda was fairly quiet this morning with the common sp present. A wander down the approach road didn't produce too much either, just **Euler's Flycatcher**, **Yellow Warbler** and **6 White-flanked Antwrens**. We had a slow day today with not many targets so wandered along a few trails to see what was around: **Blue-crowned (Trinidad) Motmot**, **Ochre-bellied Fly**, both **Manakins**, v.brief **Lilac-tailed Parrotlet -2 and Green-backed Trogon**. We went down to the Bellbird lek along the well maintained Discovery Trail to get some photos and were literally surrounded by **Bearded Bellbirds**, at least 6 males were low down bellowing their heads off – easy.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Dec – Asa Wright – Blue Waters, Tobago

Up at the veranda early again, **Scaled Pigeon** perched briefly, **Channel-billed Toucan**, **Band & Grey-rumped Swifts** and a cracking male **Long-billed Starthroat** came to the feeders.

We departed Asa Wright after a leisurely enjoyable breakfast for the 11:45am flight to Tobago. There is no need to get to the airport 2 hours before, We got there about an hour and a half before, but most passengers turned up for our flight in the last 50 minutes. There was good free wi fi internet available for the ipad in the departure lounge.

Arrived at the Bluewaters hotel mid-afternoon and relaxed, which we did a lot of here! Impressive numbers of **Frigatebirds** were on show and an **Osprey** flew lazily past with a fish.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Dec – Blue Waters – Little Tobago

A quick look behind the hotel before the 8am breakfast produced a few ticks: **Rufous-vented Chachalaca** c10, **White-fringed Antwren** – male and a male **Red-crowned Woodpecker**.

Our trip over to Little Tobago with Top Ranking Tours (\$25US) left at 2pm with a diversion over a coral reef to see colourful fish. Once on the island we were given our guided tour to see the seabird colony. At the top we were shown a day roosting **White-tailed Nightjar** at its stakeout in some bamboo. The seabird colony was v.impressive: **Brown Booby**, 3 morphs of **Red-footed Booby** and the spectacular site of a couple of hundred **Red-billed Tropicbirds**, some nesting by the path.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Dec – Gilpin Trace

Left the hotel with Newton George at 6am, the weather was warm and very showery. A lot of birding was done along the road over the mountains where Newton has his favourite spots: **Blackpoll Warbler**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** – common, **Trinidad Motmot**, **Collared Trogon** – pair, **2 Cocoa Woodcreepers**, **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **3 Olivaceous Woodcreepers**, **Scrub Greenlet**, **Red-crowned Woodpecker** and **American Redstart**. The best bird was a pair of **Red-legged Honeycreepers** that fed on fruit just above the road, Newton said we were lucky with these as they disperse and become hard to see. He tried a few leks for **Blue-backed Manakin** but the rain was making it difficult, even so we had at least 3 males and 6 females. The Gilpin Trace footpath was extremely muddy and we had heavy rain so didn't see much there. We hired wellies from the welly man for \$8TT. A wander down the even muddier Niplig trail got us a couple of bits: **Plain Antvireo**, **Barred Antshrike** and finally good views of a male **Yellow-legged Thrush** after many v.brief ones. A last ditch effort finally got us great views of a pair of **Venezuelan Flycatchers** by the road opposite the Niplig trail. We saw a barely alive, recently run over Boa Constrictor by the road. According to Newton the locals go out of their way to kill any snake they see, despite the fact there are no poisonous ones on Tobago, unlike Trinidad that has Fer de Lance and the rare Bushmaster in the rainforest. Very sad, it died very soon after we first spotted it and dragged it back to the road verge. A beautifully marked snake.

Newton then took us to his home where his wife has set up hummingbird feeders. As promised within 10 mins we had fantastic views of **2 White-tailed Sabrewings**, much better than the brief views in the hills earlier! 5sp of hummer were present including a couple of stonking male **Ruby-topaz Hummers**.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Dec – Round the Island tour (Mark)

Mark went on Newton's round the island tour which lasts all day, 4 others were with him on the tour. The highlights were early on with 3 female **Masked Ducks**, **Least Grebe**, **Blue-winged Teal**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Scrub Greenlet** and **Eared Dove** at the sewage ponds. Some time was spent successfully locating a **Cayenne Tern**, the afternoon was slowly spent driving up the west coast with not much seen.

Simon and I went back to Newtons garden to get shots of the hummers, very enjoyable with the **White-tailed Sabrewings** and **Ruby-topaz hummers** showing v.well in the sunlight. Also a **Trinidad Motmot** came in to feed on bread and a **Red-crowned Woodpecker** fed on bananas.

In the afternoon Simon chartered a small fishing boat for \$US 40 shared with Joe, a professional Californian bird photographer and went over to Little Tobago to get some more video footage and enjoy the island without the other tourists. If you do charter your own boat, ensure the fisherman provides life vests, as the 1-2m swell is a little alarming in such a small boat+ put your camera in a plastic bag as you will get splashed. Best to wear sandals and shorts as you have to wade ashore up the beach. The boat is too small to access the old jetty. It was a much better experience though, than being herded around, at a rushed pace, in a large group of non-birder tourists asking to peer down your scope! The boat was much faster than the large glass bottomed one. It sped to the island in 15 minutes, allowing us 3 hours for photography. Our boatman caught a 3 foot barracuda on the way back after 5 minutes trying. I wish fishing was that easy back home!

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Dec

Today was spent swimming in the sea and around the pool, again. We left the hotel an hour earlier than planned for the 80 minute drive to the airport and asked the taxi driver to make a 30 minute stop at the sewage ponds en route, finding a female **Masked Duck**, also there were **2 Soras**, **Green Heron**, **White-winged Swallow** and **Least Grebe**. As Mark had visited this site yesterday with Newton, he knew exactly where to find the Masked Duck, a very difficult species to see sometimes. The site is just off the main road to the airport. Approx 15 minutes from the airport. It has a huge sign and security gate, called Tobago

Plantations Beach and Golf Resort. We paid \$20 TT to the uniformed security guard to get in. Drive in between 2 lakes turn right towards a house and the sewerage ponds are on the left through a gate which was unlocked when we arrived. When Mark visited with Newton, he had to get the key from the house. Apparently Brian Lara has a holiday home on this exclusive posh resort.

We arrived at the airport in plenty of time, very easy, laid back check-in and security, no queues. Our BA flight a Boeing 777 departed on time at 7:15pm, made a brief stop in Antigua to pick up the bulk of the passengers. We arrived back at Gatwick 09:20. Zero celsius, with a hard frost.

## Bird List

All 3 of us had been to South/Central America before so we came to Trinidad and Tobago with certain target birds in mind and pretty much cleared up! We didn't go out of our way to run up a big list and saw 227sp in total + 3 heard.

Birds highlighted in Bold are lifers for me. The order is as per Wildwings checklist – we had 5 write-ins!

H Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* – heard at Arena Forest and often heard in the Northern range

1. Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus* – 1 at the sewage ponds on Tobago
2. **American (Caribbean) Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*** – 1 imm bird feeding on the shore line near the floating mosque at Orange valley, rare in Trinidad – my last flamingo sp.
3. Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* – Regularly seen along the coast
4. **Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*** – 250+ at the breeding grounds on Little Tobago, some were scoped from Blue Waters
5. Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* – All 3 morphs were seen at the breeding grounds on Little Tobago
6. Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* – 20+ at the breeding grounds on Little Tobago
7. Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* – c10 Orange valley, 2 at sewage ponds, Tobago
8. Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* – 1 Over Arena forest, 1 sewage ponds, Tobago
9. Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* – 3 of Manzanilla beach, abundant Blue Waters/Little Tobago
10. Great Blue Heron *Ardea Herodias* – 4 Orange valley shoreline
11. Great Egret *Ardea alba* – 2 Orange valley shoreline, 1 at sewage ponds, Tobago
12. Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* – c500 Caroni swamp, 5 at sewage ponds, Tobago
13. Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* – 2 Nariva swamp, c20 Caroni swamp
14. Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor* – c60 Caroni swamp
15. Green Heron *Butorides virescens* – Replaces Striated on Tobago, 1 on stream nr Blue Waters and 1 at the sewage ponds
16. Striated Heron *Butorides striata* – A couple of fly-bys, Caroni Swamp
17. Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* – Common on Trinidad, also seen sewage ponds on Tobago
18. Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* – 1 spied in mangroves, Orange Valley, 1 sewage ponds, Tobago
19. Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* – 20+ Orange valley shoreline
20. **Pinnated Bittern *Botaurus pinnatus*** – Fantastic views of 1 feeding in open at Aripo Livestock Station + 1 distant
21. **Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius*** – Rare and difficult bird to see on Trinidad, our boat guide Shawn picked one out in the canopy of the mangroves during our boat trip
22. **Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*** – a couple at Orange valley, the spectacle of c800 of these coming to roost was unforgettable!



23. Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* – Abundant on Trinidad
24. Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* – Common on Trinidad
25. Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* – Some semi-wild ones at Point Pierre, a few at sewage ponds, Tobago
26. Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* – A couple at sewage ponds, Tobago
27. **Masked Duck *Nomonyx dominicus*** – A female at sewage ponds, Tobago, was a last minute 'twitch', lucky to see as they can be elusive. Mark had 3 females on Newton George's Island tour
28. **Pearl Kite *Gampsonyx swainsonii*** – Fantastic little raptor, perched views along main road by mangroves in Nariva swamp
29. Grey-headed Kite *Leptodon cayanensis* – Great views of 1 over Arena Forest, another over Blanchisseuse Road
30. Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus* – 1 perched causing mayhem, Arena Forest
31. Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* – Classic views most mornings from the balcony at the Pax Guesthouse
32. Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* – 1 soaring over the Asa Wright was the only one seen in T&T
33. Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus* – 1 dark, 1 light phase soared over Mt St Benedict on our first morning
34. Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus* – Perched views of 1 in southern Nariva swamp
35. White Hawk *Leucopternis albicollis* – 1 over Blanchisseuse Road, 1 Asa Wright and 1 perched close – Waller Field
36. **Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis*** – 4 showy birds at Aripo Livestock station, 4 Nariva swamp
37. **Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus*** – Frequently seen over the northern range
38. Long-winged Harrier *Circus buffoni* – 1 dark, 1 light phase Nariva swamp, another southern end of Caroni swamp
39. Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – Singletons seen at most coastal sites on T&T
40. **Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*** – Common at Nariva swamp with at least 8. Also seen near Pax and Waller field
41. Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* – 1 Aripo Livestock station, 1 Orange valley shoreline. Also seen daily from Blue Waters, Tobago
42. Merlin *Falco columbarius* – 1f perched next to Pax, 1 Aripo Livestock station, 1 Caroni swamp. 2 over main road near Gilpin Trace, Tobago
43. **Rufous-vented Chachalaca *Ortalis ruficauda*** – Common in the gardens of the Bluewaters hotel on Tobago
44. Sora Porzana *Carolina* – 2 seen well at sewage ponds, Tobago
45. Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* – 1 at sewage ponds, Tobago
46. Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus* – Common Nariva swamp, 4 Caroni swamp
47. **Azure Gallinule *Porphyrio flavirostris*** – We were lucky with this one flushing 2 birds from the roadside ditch in Nariva swamp, good views of one 'hiding' on reeds
48. Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* – Common regularly seen
49. Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* – Common Nariva & Caroni swamp
50. Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* – 6 Orange valley shoreline
51. Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* – 4 Orange valley shoreline
52. Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* – 5 Manzanilla Beach, 1 Orange valley shoreline. Resident tame flock at Blue Waters, Tobago
53. Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* – 2 Aripo Livestock station
54. Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* – 3 Orange valley shoreline
55. Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* - 1 Orange valley shoreline
56. Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* – c10 Caroni swamp, 1 Little Tobago
57. Willet *Tringa semipalmata* - 6 Orange valley shoreline
58. Knot *Calidris canutus* - 6 Orange valley shoreline
59. Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* - 1 Aripo Livestock station
60. Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* – 50+ Orange valley shoreline
61. Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* – 100+ Orange valley shoreline
62. Sanderling *Calidris alba* – 6 on beach, northern Nariva swamp
63. Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* - 6 Orange valley shoreline

64. Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* - 6 Orange valley shoreline
65. Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* - 10 Orange valley shoreline
66. Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* – 2 Orange valley shoreline
67. Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* – c1000 Orange valley shoreline
68. Least Tern *Sterna antillarum* – 1 off beach, northern Nariva swamp
69. Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* – 15 Orange valley shoreline
70. Cayenne Tern *Thalasseus eurygnatha* – 1 Tobago
71. Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* – 10 Orange valley shoreline
72. Rock Dove (i) *Columba livia feral* -
- 73. Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa*** – Seen early on two mornings from Asa Wright veranda, max 3 fly-by's
74. Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis* – A couple at Blue Waters, Tobago
75. Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* - 1 Tobago
76. Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti* – Extremely common on Trinidad
77. White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* – Regularly seen in the northern range, Trinidad
78. Grey-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufaxilla* – Regularly seen in the northern range but less so than White-tipped
79. Red-bellied Macaw *Orthopsittaca manilata* – 6 in palms alongside the road in Cumuto, south of Waller Field
- 80. Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerines*** – 7 birds in trees by the Caroni swamp info centre
- 81. Lilac-tailed Parrotlet *Touit batavicus*** – 2 really bad flight views, discovery trail Asa Wright
82. Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* – 4 over the Blanchisseuse Road
83. Yellow-crowned Parrot *Amazona ochrocephala* – 8 at southern end of Nariva swamp, 2 Waller Field
- 84. Orange-winged Amazon *Amazona amazonica*** – Very common, seen daily
85. Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* – 1 by road through Arena forest
- 86. Little Cuckoo *Coccyua minuta*** – Fantastic views of 1 in mangroves, Nariva swamp
87. Greater Ani *Crotophaga major* – 5 seen in trees by the Caroni swamp info centre
88. Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* – Very common
- 89. Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia*** – Kenny took us to a spot in the Heights of Aripo for great views of this difficult bird
- 90. Tropical Screech Owl *Megascops choliba*** – 1 seen well in spotlight at Kenny's stakeout along southern part of Waller Field  
H (Ferruginous Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Heard fairly often
- 91. Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis*** – Great views of c30 at the famous Dunstan cave, Asa Wright. 1 released at Pax guesthouse
92. Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus* – 1 roosting in trees - Arena forest, 1 at stakeout during Caroni swamp boat trip
- 93. Short-tailed Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus*** – Great views of 4 birds hunting insects by the Asa Wright veranda on our first evening, none the next day and only 2 on our last evening
94. Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles semitorquatus* – 1 brief view as we drove back through palm grove along Nariva swamp shoreline
95. Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis* – 2 on road down from Heights of Aripo
- 96. White-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus cayennensis*** – 1 at day roost on Little Tobago in thick bamboo
97. Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris* – Common along Blachisseuse road and at Asa Wright
- 98. Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus*** – Often picked out amongst Grey-rumped along Blachisseuse road and at Asa Wright
99. Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyuran* – Often seen in lowlands of Trinidad
100. Fork-tailed Palm Swift *Tachornis squamata* – 6 at Waller Field, 8 Point Pierre Wildfowl trust,
101. Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus* – Regularly seen at many sites on both T&T
102. **Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*** – First seen in Theo's garden, St Joseph. 1 or 2 seen every day at Asa Wright
- 103. Little Hermit *Phaethornis longuemareus*** - 1 at Arena, 2 Blanchisseuse Road, 1 Theo's garden, St Joseph, 1 Asa Wright
104. **White-tailed Sabrewing *Campylopterus ensipennis*** – 2 seen both times we went to Newton George's garden. Briefly seen a couple of times in rainforest.

105. White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* – Common at feeders on Trinidad and Tobago
106. **Brown Violet-ear Colibri delphinae** – 2 Theo's garden, St Joseph, very rare bird on Trinidad
107. **Green-throated Mango Anthracothorax viridigula** – 2 brief and high up in mangroves, Caroni swamp, 1 cracking male at Theo's garden, St Joseph
108. Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis* – 80+ at Theo's garden, St Joseph, 2 at Newton George's garden
109. **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird Chrysolampis mosquitos** – 6 at Theo's garden, St Joseph, 2 at Newton George's garden – one of the best looking hummers
110. **Tufted Coquette Lophornis ornatus** – 1f Mt St Benedict, 1m at Theo's garden, St Joseph, 1f & 1m seen each day at Asa Wright
111. **Blue-chinned Sapphire Chlorestes notate** – 150+ at Theo's garden, St Joseph, common Asa Wright
112. **White-tailed Goldenthrout Polytmus guainumbi** – 1f eventually found feeding on small purple flowers in southern Nariva swamp
113. **White-chested Emerald Amazilia brevirostris** – 4 along Blanchisseuse Road, 150+ at Theo's garden, St Joseph, common Asa Wright
114. **Copper-rumped Hummingbird Amazilia tobaci** – by far the commonest hummer, seen daily, max 500+! at Theo's garden, St Joseph
115. **Long-billed Starthroat Heliomaster longirostris** – 4 at Theo's garden, St Joseph, 1f & 1m at the Asa Wright feeders
116. **Green-backed (White-tailed) Trogon Trogon viridis** – 2m Arena Forest, 1m in bamboo below Asa Wright
117. Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris* – 1m at Radio station, Morne Bleu. Pair near Gilpin Trace, Tobago
118. **Violaceous (Guianan) Trogon Trogon violaceus** – 1m Arena Forest, great views
119. Ringed Kingfisher *Ceryle torquata* – 1 or 2 usually seen on wires as driving along main Churchill-Roosevelt highway
120. Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle Americana* - 1 southern Caroni swamp, 1 Arena Forest
121. **American Pygmy Kingfisher Chloroceryle aenea** – 1f Southern Caroni swamp, cracking perched views for c5mins, another fleeting view from the boat trip
122. **Trinidad (Blue-crowned) Motmot Momotus bahamensis** – Now split from Blue-crowned. First seen at Asa Wright, then at Newton's garden, Tobago
123. **Rufous-tailed Jacamar Galbula ruficauda** – 3 at Arena forest. Fairly common along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago
124. Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus* – Views were always distant from the Asa Wright veranda, better views at Arena forest.
125. Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus* – 3 Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright. 1 Gilpin Trace, Tobago
126. **Red-crowned Woodpecker Melanerpes rubricapillus** – 1 in grounds behind Blue Waters, 1 along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago
127. **Red-rumped Woodpecker Veniliornis kirkii** – 1m heard, then called in for great views – southern Caroni swamp
128. Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* – pair in bamboo below Asa Wright
129. Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* – 1 Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright
130. Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus* – 3 seen well along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago
131. **Straight-billed Woodcreeper Dendroplex picus** – 2 close views from boat ride in Caroni swamp
132. **Cocoa Woodcreeper Xiphorhynchus susurrans** – 1 called in along path, Mt St Benedict. 2 seen well along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago
133. **Streak-headed Woodcreeper Lepidocolaptes souleyetii** – 1 was seen well by the info centre at Point Pierre
134. **Stripe-breasted Spinetail Synallaxis cinnamomea** – 1 Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright. 1 brief Gilpin Trace, Tobago
135. Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomeus* – 4 Aripo Livestock Station, 2 Nariva swamp
136. Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans* – 2 Arena forest

137. **Grey-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis*** – 2 Mt St Benedict – 1 came right in to the call for unbeatable views
138. **Great Antshrike *Taraba major*** – 2 pairs Asa Wright seen on a couple of days
139. **Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus canadensis*** – 1 pair Arena forest came straight in to call
140. **Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus*** – 4 Mt St Benedict, 1m Blanchisseuse road, regularly seen from Asa Wright veranda
141. Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis* – 1 Niplig trail, Tobago
142. White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris* – 5 Blanchisseuse road, 4 Asa Wright approach road
143. **Northern White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora intermedia*** – 1m + 1f in grounds behind Blue Waters
144. **White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes*** – Took some time to find but eventually had good looks at 1m singing low in bushes along footpath, Mt St Benedict  
H (Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis*) – 2 heard Blanchisseuse road
145. **Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano*** – Fantastic views of up to 6m at their lek, Asa Wright
146. **Golden-headed Manakin *Dixiphia erythrocephala*** – Brief male along Blanchisseuse road, 6+m seen each time we went to lek at Asa Wright
147. White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus* – 1m Arena forest, max 5 seen Asa Wright
148. **Blue-backed Manakin *Chiroxiphia pareola*** – 5m + many females around Gilpin Trace
149. **Pied Water Tyrant *Fluvicola pica*** – 2 Aripo Livestock Station, 8+ Nariva swamp
150. **White-headed Marsh Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala*** - 4 Aripo Livestock Station, 4 Nariva swamp
151. Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* – V.Common
152. Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* – 3 Nariva swamp, 2 Tobago
153. **Sulphury Flycatcher *Tyrannopsis sulphurea*** – 8 Waller field, found as soon as we arrived
154. Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua* – 1 Mt St Benedict in roadside trees
155. Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus* – 1 Mt St Benedict in trees by path
156. Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus* – V.Common
157. Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* – 2 Mt St Benedict in roadside trees
158. **Venezuelan Flycatcher *Myiarchus venezuelensis*** – 2 showed v.well at last ditch attempt in trees opposite Niplig trail
159. Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi* – 1 catching insects from dead tree along Blanchisseuse road
160. Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus euleri* – 1 Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright approach road
161. Fuscous Flycatcher *Cnemotriccus fuscatus* – 1 Mt St Benedict
162. **Yellow-olive (Fly) Flatbill *Tolmomyias sulphurens*** – 1 Arena forest
163. Ochre-lored Flatbill (Yellow-b Fly) *Tolmomyias flaviventris* – 2 Arena forest, 1 Asa Wright
164. Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* – 2 Mt St Benedict
165. Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii* – 1 Mt St Benedict, 4 Arena forest
166. Southern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum* – 1 Mt St Benedict
167. **Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*** – Rare bird on Trinidad, 1 seen high up along Blanchisseuse road
168. **Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginous*** – 1 seen high up along Blanchisseuse road, 1 seen each day at Asa Wright, 1 Gilpin trace approach road, Tobago
169. White-winged Becard *Pachyrhamphus polychopterus* – 1m seen in mangroves, southern Caroni swamp
170. White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer* – 4 Nariva swamp, 4 in fields southern Caroni swamp. 2 sewage ponds, Tobago
171. Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea* – Common Aripo Livestock Station, Nariva swamp, 10+ on way to Arena forest
172. Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* – Commonest swallow, regularly seen
173. Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* – 1 Nariva swamp was only one
174. **Rufous-breasted Wren *Pheugopedius rutilus*** – 2 Mt St Benedict, 1 seen most days Asa Wright
175. House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* – Regularly seen
176. **Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*** – V.Common

177. **Yellow-legged Thrush *Turdus flavipes*** – 1m eventually seen well along Niplig trail, Tobago, after many fleeting glimpses
178. **Cocoa Thrush *Turdus fumigatus*** – First seen along Blanchisseuse road, common Asa Wright
179. Spectacled (Bare-eyed) Thrush *Turdus nudigenis* – Fairly common, regularly seen
180. White-necked Thrush *Turdus albicollis* – Cracking views of 1 feeding along Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright
181. **Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus*** – Great views of 1 Mt St Benedict, 1 regularly seen close to Asa Wright centre
182. Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* – 1 Mt St Benedict
183. **Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*** – 1 Mt St Benedict, 6 Arena forest
184. **Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes*** – 1 Gilpin trace road, 1 Blue Waters, Tobago
185. Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* - Common
186. Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* – Just 1 seen, Point Pierre Wildfowl Trust
187. Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* - Common
188. Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* – 6 seen along track south side of Waller Field
189. Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris* – V.Common
190. Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Chrysomus icterocephalus* – 2m, 1f on bird table by info centre, Point Pierre Wildfowl Trust
191. **Moriche Oriole *Icterus chrysocephalus*** – Rare bird, 1 seen well perched for 30mins – Waller Field, another 1 seen along track south side of Waller Field
192. **Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis*** – Fairly common, Mt St Benedict, Point Pierre Wildfowl Trust, Theo's garden St Joseph, Asa Wright
193. **Red-breasted Blackbird *Sturnella militaris*** – 12 seen in marshy fields, Aripo Livestock Station
194. Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi* – 1 seen well in trees along road up to Mt St Benedict
195. Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechial* – Frequently seen in the hills
196. Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata* – 1 winter plumage along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago
197. Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulean* – The rarest bird of the trip, only the 2<sup>nd</sup> ever for Trinidad!! 1m winter seen feeding in trees over track through Arena forest. Record submitted to rarities committee – unanimously accepted as of 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 13.
198. Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* – 2 Blanchisseuse road, 2 southern Caroni swamp, 1 Asa Wright
199. American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* – 1m Nariva swamp, 1f southern Caroni swamp
200. Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus* – 1m seen well along path, Mt St Benedict, 2 Arena forest, 1 St Joseph
201. Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* - Abundant
202. **Bicoloured Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor*** – 2 in roadside mangroves, Nariva swamp, 2 southern Caroni swamp
203. Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* – V.common, Trinidad
204. **Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*** – 1m 1f, watched well feeding on fruit along the road up to Gilpin Trace, Tobago. V.lucky to see these as they are v.hard to find when they disperse
205. Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* – Common in the northern range
206. Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* – Only 1 seen on 1<sup>st</sup> day at Pax
207. **Trinidad Euphonia *Euphonia trinitatis*** – 1f Mt St Benedict, Another female Arena forest
208. Violaceous Euphonia *Euphonia violacea* – Fairly regular, Northern range
209. Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria* – 1m seen at top of road, Mt St Benedict, Kenny said it could be an escape – or it could be a genuine vagrant?
210. Grassland Yellow-Finch *Sicalis luteola* – 2 close to the cowsheds, Aripo Livestock Station
211. **Speckled Tanager *Tangara guttata*** – 3 seen well high up along Blanchisseuse road
212. Turquoise Tanager *Tangara Mexicana* – Often seen in Northern range
213. Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola* – 3 Arena forest, 1 Blanchisseuse road, 1 Asa Wright
214. Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* - Common
215. Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* - Abundant
216. Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo* - Common
217. **Hepatic Tanager *Piranga hepatica*** – 1m catching moths at the radio station, Morne Bleu
218. Red-crowned Ant-Tanager *Habia rubica* – 1m seen well along Blanchisseuse road

- 219. White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* – Common
- 220. White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* - Much less common than White-lined
- 221. Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens* – 1 seen a couple of times along road, Mt St Benedict
- 222. **Masked Cardinal** *Paroaria nigrogenis* – 1m & 1imm on bird table, Point Pierre Wildfowl Trust – split from Red-capped
- 223. Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* – Often seen in rank roadside grass
- 224. Black-faced Grassquit *Tiaris bicolor* – 1f Newton's garden, Tobago
- 225. **Sooty Grassquit** *Tiaris fuliginosus* – Outstanding views of a pair drinking from roadside puddle, Arena forest. 1m singing along track to radio station, Morne Bleu
- 226. Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis* – 1ad with 2juv in roadside grass along Mt St Benedict, rare nowadays on Trinidad
- 227. **Ruddy-breasted Seed-eater** *Sporophila minuta* – 1m singing away in bushes by a cowshed, Aripo Livestock Station, this seed-eater too is sadly rare due to trapping

Targets missed:

Little Tinamou – Heard plenty but no realistic chance of seeing one

Trinidad Piping-guan – Tried high up on Blanchisseuse road and Morne Bleu with no success. We didn't try Grand Riviere as they were not being seen much, apparently they move away due to the lack of fruiting trees at this time of year, more likely Jan/Feb. A couple from the Asa Wright left at 2.30am one morning to try and failed.

Chestnut Woodpecker – Looked hard for them at Asa Wright without any luck

Pale-breasted Spinetail – Tried but never heard any

White-throated Spadebill – Newton tried hard to get us one of these little blighters, but no luck, the rain didn't help.

Short-tailed Pygmy-tyrant – Kenny saw one as he went to get his van in Arena forest, despite hearing them we never saw any.

**View over Bluewaters, Tobago**

