

Trinidad & Tobago: Incredible Birds & Wildlife | April 10 – 19, 2026 | Species List by Stephen Grace



Compiled by Naturalist Journeys tour host Stephen Grace with local guides Dave Ramlal, Josh Bajnath, Mukesh Ramdass and Sabira on Trinidad; Jason Radix and Desmond on Tobago; and Zolani Frank on Little Tobago. Our clients included Amy, Ann, Nancy, Jeanette, Kathy, Janet, Donna, Alex and Roni.

Our Naturalist Journeys tour was an outstanding success, recording **213 species** across **56 families** and spanning an exceptional range of habitats from lowland wetlands to montane rainforest and offshore seabird colonies—yielding a rich cross-section of Neotropical birdlife.

Highlights included prolonged views of the endemic and critically endangered **Trinidad Piping-Guan**; the evening roost of **Scarlet Ibis** at Caroni Swamp; a rich assemblage of hummingbirds, manakins, trogons, and tanagers in the Northern Range, along with **Oilbird** and **Bearded Bellbird**; the endemic **Trinidad Motmot** on Tobago; and **Red-billed Tropicbird** and other seabirds nesting on Little Tobago Island. The contrast between Trinidad’s South American avifauna and Tobago’s more insular assemblage provided a strong biogeographic framework for the trip.

Pre-tour birding at Pax Guest House and the Pointe-à-Pierre Wildfowl Trust provided an early introduction to the transition from lowland wetlands to the foothills of the Northern Range. Highlights included **Rufous Nightjar**, **Gray-cowled Wood-Rail**, **Short-tailed Hawk**, **Green Kingfisher**, **Streaked Xenops**, and **Masked Cardinal**. Nesting activity added depth, with **Black-throated Mango**, **Ruddy Ground Dove**, **Yellow Oriole**, and **Palm Tanager** all observed attending active nests.

At Hacienda Jacana, we encountered a mix of wetland-edge, open-country, and secondary growth species such as **Ruby-topaz Hummingbird**, **Striated Heron**, **Purple Gallinule**, **Wattled Jacana**, **Southern Lapwing**, **Black-tailed Tityra**, **Great Kiskadee**, **Boat-billed Flycatcher**, **Crested Oropendola**, **Tropical Mockingbird**, **Spectacled Thrush**, **Cocoa Thrush**, **Blue-gray Tanager**, **Silver-beaked Tanager**, and **Bananaquit**. Highlights included a **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** being mobbed, two **Red-bellied Macaws** at a nesting site, and a **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** subduing butterfly prey.

Eastern Trinidad — Aripo Savanna, Nariva Swamp, and Atlantic coastal habitats — produced a strong suite of species including **Pinnated Bittern**, **Limpkin**, **Long-winged Harrier**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Common Black Hawk**, **Yellow-chinned Spinetail**, **White-headed Marsh Tyrant**, **Pied Water-Tyrant**, **Red-breasted Meadowlark**, **Grassland Yellow-Finch**, and **Olive-gray Saltator**. Additional highlights included an

American Pygmy Kingfisher flying back and forth beneath a bridge, a male **Blue-black Grassquit** displaying, and **Blue-and-yellow Macaw** flyovers—a species formerly extirpated and declared locally extinct, now successfully reintroduced and breeding at Nariva.

En route into the Northern Range, **Swallow-tailed Kite**, **Plumbeous Kite**, and **White Hawk** were observed. At Bajnath Estate, highlights included a day-roosting **Common Pauraque**, **White-necked Jacobin**, **Green Hermit**, **Tufted Coquette**, **Blue-chinned Sapphire**, **Copper-rumped Hummingbird**, and **White-chested Emerald**, with **Little Hermit** detected at a lek.

At Grand Riviere, we obtained prolonged views of the endemic and critically endangered **Trinidad Piping-Guan**, including a nesting individual.

At Asa Wright Nature Centre, feeder activity provided excellent views of **Long-billed Starthroat**, **Brown Violetear**, **Green Honeycreeper**, **Purple Honeycreeper**, **White-lined Tanager**, **Trinidad Euphonia**, and **Violaceous Euphonia**. In the canopy, **Blue-headed Parrot** and **Channel-billed Toucan** were observed. Male and female **Barred Antshrikes** viewed close together provided a vivid illustration of sexual dimorphism.

At Dunston Cave, we observed **Oilbird** at roost and nest sites. Additional highlights included **White-bearded Manakin** displaying at a lek, **Golden-headed Manakin** foraging on Miconia berries, and **Bearded Bellbird** vocalizing.

En route to Caroni Swamp, a stop at Millennium Park wetlands produced **Anhinga** spreading its wings to dry, **Western Cattle-Egret** following active construction equipment to forage, **Osprey** carrying fish, and **Ringed Kingfisher** diving for prey. We also encountered a flock of **Yellow-hooded Blackbirds** in surprising numbers—a swirling, blizzard-like movement of birds over the wetlands.

Caroni Swamp produced large roosts of **Scarlet Ibis**, along with **American Flamingo**, **Little Blue Heron**, **Tricolored Heron**, **Snowy Egret**, and **Great Egret**, as well as mangrove specialists **Straight-billed Woodcreeper** and **Green-throated Mango**. Caroni's conservation success in protecting the **Scarlet Ibis** inspired our group.

Blanchisseuse Road yielded **Gray-lined Hawk**, all three regional trogons—**Collared Trogon**, **Guianan Violaceous Trogon**, and **Green-backed Trogon**—along with **White-winged Becard**, **Yellow-rumped Cacique**, **Swallow Tanager**, **Red-legged Honeycreeper**, **Blue Dacnis**, **Turquoise Tanager**, **Bay-headed Tanager**, and **Yellow-bellied Seed eater**.

En route to Piarco Airport, we observed **Black-necked Stilt**, **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, and **Crested Caracara**.

Transfer to Tobago introduced a distinct avifaunal mix, including several species absent from Trinidad, such as **White-tailed Sabrewing**, **Red-crowned Woodpecker**, **Scrub Greenlet**, and **Black-faced Grassquit**. Vultures were notably absent, with **Yellow-headed Caracara** as a conspicuous scavenger occupying that open-country niche.

Wetlands at Bon Accord and Centre Street produced **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, White-cheeked Pintail, Least Grebe, Common Gallinule, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Willet, and Gray Kingbird. Greater Yellowlegs and Lesser Yellowlegs** were observed side by side, allowing clear comparison, and field differences between **Spotted Sandpiper** and **Solitary Sandpiper** were noted.

At Cuffie River, highlights included **Rufous-vented Chachalaca**, one of Trinidad and Tobago's two national birds (along with **Scarlet Ibis**); **White-tailed Nightjar**, observed roosting on the road at night and in flight; **Rufous-breasted Hermit; Great Black Hawk**; and the endemic **Trinidad Motmot**.

Adventure Farm added **Red-rumped Woodpecker, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, and Fuscous Flycatcher**. Fort James produced **Brown Pelican**, along with **Black Skimmer, Laughing Gull**, and tern species including **Sandwich Tern, Royal Tern, and Roseate Tern**, all in breeding plumage.

Main Ridge Forest Reserve yielded **Gray-throated Leaf-tosser, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Venezuelan Flycatcher, Blue-backed Manakin** at a lek, and **Yellow-legged Thrush**, including a leucistic individual.

Little Tobago Island supported breeding **Red-billed Tropicbird**, including two individuals nesting on the ground near the observation platform, along with **Red-footed Booby** (all three morphs), **Brown Booby**, and **Brown Noddy. Magnificent Frigatebirds** were observed engaging in kleptoparasitic interactions, harassing **Red-billed Tropicbirds** and forcing them to relinquish their fish. **Sargasso Shearwaters** were noted in burrows, and **Scaly-naped Pigeon** was also observed. Upon returning to the dock at Blue Waters Inn, **Ruddy Turnstones** were observed foraging in sargassum along the tideline.

Across the tour, habitat diversity and island biogeography were central themes. Trinidad's strong South American affinities contrasted with Tobago's more insular assemblage, producing clear differences in species composition across a short geographic distance.

The tour combined high species diversity with key behavioral observations—including lekking manakins, jacamar predation, kleptoparasitism by frigatebirds, and nesting activity across multiple species—and significant conservation encounters, particularly **Trinidad Piping-Guan, Scarlet Ibis, and Blue-and-yellow Macaw**.

BIRDS: 213 species were recorded, including **9 Pre-tour Only, 2 Endemic, 2 Introduced, 7 Heard-only, and 1 Critically Endangered**.

The eBird link below details the 213 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Naturalist Journeys Trinidad & Tobago: Incredible Birds & Wildlife](#)

[9–19 Apr 2026 \(11 days\)](#)

Following is a list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and other taxa we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

E = Endemic **I** = Introduced **H** = Heard Only **PT** = Pre-tour Only **CR** = Critically Endangered

TINAMOUS — Tinamidae (1)

Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* (**H**) — Heard rather than seen—soft descending whistles at Hacienda Jacana and Asa Wright. Tinamous are among the most ancient living bird lineages, closely related to ratites (ostriches, rheas), though they retain limited flight. Their breeding system is unusual: females may mate with multiple males, while males incubate the glossy, vividly colored eggs and care for the young. When alarmed, they prefer to run rather than fly.

DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS — Anatidae (5)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis* — Observed in wetland habitats including Caroni and Bon Accord ponds. A tree-perching duck with unusually long legs and strong, grasping toes; highly social and vocal with bright whistled calls.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* (**PT**) — Observed by some of the group pre-tour at the Wildfowl Trust; a large, distinctive duck with red facial caruncles, often semi-domesticated but native to the Neotropics.

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* — Long-distance migrant wintering widely in the Neotropics; pale blue wing patches flash in flight. Seen at Centre Street Ponds.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis* — Common in coastal lagoons; white cheek and red bill base distinctive. Well adapted to brackish and saline habitats, using salt glands to excrete excess salt. Seen well at Bon Accord.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* — A small dabbling duck with a Holarctic distribution, it is a long-distance migrant, with North American populations wintering widely into the Neotropics. One female observed at Centre Street Ponds; uncommon locally.

CHACHALACAS, GUANS & CURASSOWS — Cracidae (2)

Trinidad Piping-Guan *Pipile pipile* (**E**) (**CR**) — Endemic and Critically Endangered; observed at Grand Riviere with good scope views. Also, one female was nesting very close to the viewing platform, largely obscured by bromeliad leaves. Likely only a few hundred survive, making each encounter a window into an older, wilder Trinidad. Locally known as Pawi. Feeds heavily on nutmeg fruits and disperses seeds, helping sustain the forest it depends on.

Cracids—the chachalacas, guans and curassows—are an ancient lineage of modern birds, part of an early branch of the Galliformes. They retain primitive traits, including large eggs, relatively weak flight, and a tendency to move through the forest by walking or climbing rather than sustained flight.

Rufous-vented Chachalaca *Ortalis ruficauda* — Common voice of Tobago dawn; seen well at Cuffie River. One of Trinidad and Tobago's national birds (along with Scarlet Ibis), often feeding on fruit around lodges.

PIGEONS & DOVES — Columbidae (8)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (**I**) — Urban feral species derived from domesticated birds; common in developed areas. All feral populations worldwide trace their ancestry to the wild Rock Dove of Europe, North Africa, and western Asia, originally a cliff-nesting species whose natural ecology preadapted it to urban environments. A classic synanthrope—a species that thrives alongside humans—exploiting buildings as substitute cliffs and taking advantage of abundant food and nesting sites in cities.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis* — Seen in forest-edge habitat on Tobago; deep cooing carries far.

Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa* — Seen from Asa Wright verandah perched in the canopy; rich chestnut tones with distinctive copper scaling. A notably shy and canopy-dwelling forest pigeon, it is more often detected by its deep, resonant cooing than seen; its cryptic plumage and preference for high, dense foliage make clear views uncommon.

Scaly-naped Pigeon *Patagioenas squamosa* — Very shy; seen briefly perched on Little Tobago. A Caribbean species likely established after storm-assisted dispersal events.

Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti* — Small and abundant; frequent along roadsides and lawns. Rapid wing-whir often heard before seen.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* — A shy, ground-foraging understory dove; typically detected by its soft, mournful cooing. When approached it often flushes explosively, flashing the bold white tips of the outer tail feathers in flight. Seen at Hacienda Jacana and elsewhere on Tobago.

Gray-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufaxilla* — Heard more often than seen; prefers dim forest understory. Seen at Asa Wright.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* — Observed on Tobago; named for the small dark crescent on the auriculars (feathers covering the ear opening), not a true ear. A common, adaptable dove of open and semi-open habitats, often seen walking on the ground or perched conspicuously.

CUCKOOS AND ALLIES — Cuculidae (2)

Greater Ani *Crotophaga major* — Seen well at Caroni; larger than Smooth-billed Ani, with a pale eye and glossy sheen. Shares the distinctive deep, laterally compressed bill typical of anis, here appearing heavier and more robust. Cooperative breeder forming communal nesting groups.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* — Common in open country; shares the same distinctive deep, laterally compressed bill, here smoother and more evenly curved. Also a cooperative breeder with shared nesting.

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES — Caprimulgidae (3)

Common Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis* — Heard often; a defining nocturnal voice of the Neotropics. One seen at close range day-roosting at Bajnath Estate; superb cryptic plumage allows it to vanish against leaf litter and forest floor, often remaining motionless until nearly stepped on.

White-tailed Nightjar *Hydropsalis cayennensis* — Seen near Cuffie River and on Little Tobago; roosting on roads and perched on wires, actively hawking insects around lights. In flight, shows striking white flashes in the tail and wings, especially in low light. One also observed day-roosting on Little Tobago, relying on excellent cryptic plumage to blend into the leaf-litter substrate.

Rufous Nightjar *Anrostomus rufus* (PT) — Heard well and briefly seen by some group members pre-tour at Pax; a more localized and less frequently encountered nightjar of open and scrubby habitats.

POTOOS — Nyctibiidae (1)

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus* (H) — Heard at Cuffie River; masters of camouflage, aligning perfectly with broken branches.

OILBIRD — Steatornithidae (1)

Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis* — Exceptional views at Dunston Cave; birds perched on ledges and circling overhead. Their eerie, rasping vocalizations carry through the cave, adding to the otherworldly atmosphere. Traditionally harvested by Indigenous peoples for their fat (rendered as oil), this is the world's only truly nocturnal, flying frugivore that uses echolocation to navigate. Unlike bats, which use ultrasonic clicks, Oilbirds produce audible clicks that we can hear. A key seed disperser of large-seeded

forest trees—especially palms. At Asa Wright, Manicole palms grown from seeds dispersed by Oilbirds in Dunston Cave and later gathered and planted by Mukesh illustrate long-term stewardship and a tightly coupled plant–bird mutualism.

SWIFTS — Family Apodidae (3)

Gray-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris* — Small swift seen over Blanchisseuse Road; rapid, flickering flight. Swifts spend most of their lives on the wing—feeding on aerial insects, drinking by skimming water surfaces, and even sleeping in flight; they rarely perch except at nest or roost sites.

Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus* — Seen flying above Blanchisseuse Road; best separated by structure and flight style, with a slightly longer, more tapered rear and different wingbeat cadence.

Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyura* — Common throughout tour; distinctive compact silhouette with short tail. Roosts communally, sometimes in large numbers, often in chimneys, caves, or hollow trees.

HUMMINGBIRDS — Trochilidae (15)

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* — Dominant feeder species. Mature males flash bright white; immature males often show a buffy to cinnamon (peach-toned) wash on the face and throat as they transition into adult plumage. “Jacobin” refers to the French Revolutionary-era group whose black-and-white attire—dark clothing with a contrasting white collar—echoes this hummingbird’s bold white neck band. Occurs on both Trinidad and Tobago.

Rufous-breasted Hermit *Glaucis hirsutus* — Seen well at Cuffie River; nest observed at Main Ridge. A trapline feeder: rather than defending a single flower patch, it follows a regular circuit (“trapline route”) through the forest, visiting widely spaced nectar sources in sequence. This reduces competition and allows flowers time to replenish nectar between visits. Occurs on both Trinidad and Tobago.

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy* — Deep forest species; largest of the local hermits. Long, strongly decurved bill matches curved flowers in a coevolved “key-and-lock” system, granting efficient, low-competition nectar access while ensuring precise pollen transfer. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Little Hermit *Phaethornis longuemareus* — Tiny species observed lekking near Bajnath Estate. Males gather at traditional display courts, each defending a small perch and giving high, repetitive calls while making short display flights; females visit only to choose a mate, after which males provide no parental care. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae* — Abundant at Asa Wright feeders; subtly beautiful, with a green throat patch and iridescent violet ear patches that can be flared during display and agitation. Occurs on Trinidad; vagrant or extremely rare on Tobago.

Ruby-topaz Hummingbird *Chrysolampis mosquitus* — Brilliant males; structural coloration (microscopic feather structures) produces angle-dependent fiery red and gold flashes. A seasonal South American migrant to Trinidad and Tobago, tracking flowering cycles and nectar availability.

Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis* — Frequent at feeders on both islands; females observed on nests. Typically territorial, defending concentrated nectar sources such as flowering trees or feeders, with aggression most pronounced in males.

Green-throated Mango *Anthracothorax viridigula* — Mangrove specialist; seen at Caroni. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Tufted Coquette *Lophornis ornatus* — Tiny, spectacular species on Trinidad; males with orange crest and flared cheek feathers used in display. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Long-billed Starthroat *Heliomaster longirostris* — Seen at Asa Wright feeders; long, straight bill adapted for tubular flowers. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Blue-tailed Emerald *Chlorostilbon mellisugus* (PT) — Seen pre-tour at Pax; smaller body and more deeply forked tail than similar Blue-chinned Sapphire. Occurs on Trinidad only.

White-tailed Sabrewing *Campylopterus curvipennis* — Tobago specialty; observed at Cuffie River feeders

and in the wild at Main Ridge. A large hummingbird with modified outer primaries—the shafts are thickened and slightly flattened (“sabre-like”), stiffening the wing and producing a louder, more powerful flight. Occurs on Tobago only.

Copper-rumped Hummingbird *Saucerottia tobaci* — Common feeder species on Trinidad and Tobago; distinctive white “stockings.”

White-chested Emerald *Chrysuronia brevirostris* — Common at feeders on Trinidad; bright white underparts. Occurs on Trinidad only.

Blue-chinned Sapphire *Chlorestes notata* — Regular at flowers and feeders on Trinidad; beautiful blue throat visible in good light. Occurs on Trinidad; rare or vagrant on Tobago.

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS — Rallidae (3)

Gray-cowled Wood-Rail *Aramides cajaneus* (PT) — Skulky; glimpsed at Wildfowl Trust. Loud dawn calls.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* — Common wetland species with red frontal shield. Observed fighting at Centre Street Ponds.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinicus* — Brightly colored marsh bird; an exceptionally strong disperser, with individuals capable of long-distance movements and frequent vagrancy far outside their normal range, allowing colonization of new wetlands. Walks lightly across floating and emergent vegetation using extremely long toes that distribute its weight. Seen well at Hacienda Jacana.

LIMPKIN — Aramididae (1)

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna* — Seen at Nariva; a specialist on large freshwater snails, especially apple snails (*Pomacea*). Uses its long, slightly decurved bill to extract the snail from the shell via the aperture with precise, practiced movements. Strongly tied to wetlands with abundant mollusks; populations often track snail availability. Famous for its loud, wailing calls—often heard at dusk and night—which carry long distances across marshes.

STILTS AND AVOCETS — Recurvirostridae (1)

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* — Long-legged wader seen near Trinidad airport; strikingly adapted for shallow wetlands, with legs so long they allow the bird to forage in water deeper than most shorebirds can manage, expanding its feeding niche while reducing competition.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS — Charadriidae (2)

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* — One observed at Caroni; named for the slight webbing between its toes (“semipalmated”), an adaptation that aids stability and movement on soft, muddy substrates.

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* — Common in open habitats; seen often on tour. Aggressive nest defender. Equipped with sharp, bony spurs on the carpal joint (the “wrist”) of each wing, used in threat displays and aerial strikes against intruders. Birds will dive at predators—or humans who wander too close to a nest—and can deliver forceful blows while calling loudly. Has been spreading through Central America and Caribbean; a relatively recent colonist to Trinidad & Tobago, first recorded on Trinidad in 1961 and reaching Tobago by 1974, followed by rapid population expansion on both islands.

JACANAS — Jacanidae (1)

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* — Seen well at Hacienda Jacana. Extraordinarily long toes and claws distribute weight, allowing it to walk on floating vegetation like lily pads. Occupies shallow wetlands with dense surface cover. Exhibits polyandry with reversed sex roles: females are larger and more aggressive, defending territories that encompass multiple males, and laying clutches in several nests;

each male builds the nest, incubates the eggs, and provides sole parental care. Males can even carry small chicks under their wings when threatened.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES — Scolopacidae (8)

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus* — Seen near Bon Accord; long, decurved bill used to probe mud and sand for crabs and other invertebrates. Recently split from Eurasian Whimbrel, recognizing the New World population as a separate species based on differences in genetics, vocalizations, and subtle morphology.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* — Common; constant tail bobbing. Seen in spotted breeding plumage on this tour.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* — Seen near Caroni; nests in trees unlike most shorebirds.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* — Graceful wetland forager. Seen side by side with Greater at Centre Street Ponds. Smaller and more delicate than Greater, with a shorter, straighter, finer bill; call usually a sharp one-note *tu* or two-note *tu-tu*.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata* — Large shorebird; subdued gray-brown at rest but striking in flight, with a bold black-and-white wing pattern. Seen at Bon Accord.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* — Larger and louder than Lesser; bill longer, heavier at the base, and often slightly upcurved. Seen side by side with Lesser at Centre Street Ponds. Call typically a louder, attention-grabbing three- or four-note whistle, often given in flight.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — Seen at Blue Waters Inn foraging along shoreline. The name reflects both behavior and plumage: “turnstone” from its habit of flipping over stones, shells, and debris to uncover invertebrates, and “ruddy” for the rich orange-brown tones of the breeding plumage.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* — Seen at Millennium Park. Identified in the field by small size, dark legs, and a short, straight, blunt-tipped bill; typically shows a relatively plain face and compact, “peep-like” structure. Best separated from similar species by overall structure and bill shape—the partial toe webbing (“semipalmation”) is rarely visible in the field.

GULLS AND TERNS — Laridae (6)

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* — Common along Tobago coasts; adults in breeding plumage show dark hoods and give loud, laughing calls.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* — Observed at Fort James; lower mandible longer than upper, skimming the water surface to catch fish by touch.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* — Seen in large numbers at Little Tobago; observed nesting in colonies.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* — Seen from Fort James through scope; pale, graceful tern with long tail streamers.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* — Seen from Fort James; black bill with yellow tip (“mustard-tipped”).

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* — Common coastal species seen well at Fort James; powerful plunge-diver with bright orange bill.

FLAMINGOS — Phoenicopteridae (1)

American Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* — Brilliant pink flocks at Caroni roost; coloration derived from carotenoid-rich diet, similar to Scarlet Ibis.

GREBES — Podicipedidae (1)

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus* — Tiny dark grebe with bright yellow eye; often vanishes with a sudden dive. Seen well at Bon Accord and Centre Street ponds.

TROPICBIRDS — Phaethontidae (1)

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* — Showstopper at Little Tobago; birds passed at eye level with long tail streamers trailing. Nests on cliffs and open ground; frequently harassed by frigatebirds attempting to steal fish. Two young observed nesting near the observation platform.

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS — Procellariidae (1)

Sargasso Shearwater *Puffinus lherminieri* — Found in a burrow on Little Tobago; small warm-water shearwater of tropical pelagic zones.

FRIGATEBIRDS — Fregatidae (1)

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* — Common overhead; never lands on water. Frequently kleptoparasitic, stealing fish from tropicbirds. Males display inflatable red throat sac.

BOOBIES AND GANNETS — Sulidae (2)

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* — Common at Little Tobago; three color morphs present. Most arboreal booby, nesting in trees.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* — Seen nesting on cliffs and from boat; streamlined plunge-diver. Less common than Red-footed Booby at Little Tobago.

ANHINGAS — Anhingidae (1)

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* — Seen at Millennium Park and Bon Accord; often perched with wings spread to dry. Plumage is even less waterproof than in cormorants, reducing buoyancy for efficient underwater hunting but causing rapid waterlogging. Typically submerges quietly, almost sinking straight down (unlike the more forceful forward dives of cormorants), and swims with only the neck exposed—hence the nickname “snakebird.” This low waterproofing increases heat loss, helping explain its largely tropical distribution, though habitat and prey availability also play key roles.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS — Phalacrocoracidae (1)

Neotropic Cormorant *Nannopterum brasilianum* — Frequently seen drying its wings; similar posture to Anhinga. Observed at Millennium Park and near Caroni. Wing-drying reflects reduced feather waterproofing, which aids diving by reducing buoyancy. Compared to Double-crested Cormorant, Neotropic is smaller and slimmer, with a relatively longer, more wedge-shaped tail and a shorter, finer bill. Facially, it shows a dull yellowish to yellow-orange gular patch with a pointed or triangular rear border, often edged with a thin white line in breeding plumage; Double-crested has a larger, brighter orange facial patch with a rounder border and more bare skin in front of the eye.

IBISES — Threskiornithidae (2)

Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber* — Caroni spectacle; large flocks returning to roost at dusk. Bright red coloration derived from carotenoid-rich crustaceans. The long, strongly downcurved bill is adapted for tactile probing in mud and shallow water, allowing the bird to detect and extract buried prey such as crabs and shrimp. One of Trinidad and Tobago’s national birds (along with Rufous-vented Chachalaca) and a major conservation success story.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* — Seen at Bon Accord; dark plumage with iridescent sheen. Widespread globally.

HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNs — Ardeidae (11)

Pinnated Bittern *Botaurus pinnatus* — Rare roadside encounter at Nariva; cryptic marsh species

that freezes with bill pointed skyward.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* — Coastal specialist feeding heavily on crabs. Caroni and Centre Street Ponds.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* — Stocky heron active at dusk and night. Millennium Park, Caroni and Centre Street Ponds.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* — Both blue adults and white juveniles observed. Juveniles are entirely white and often forage among flocks of white egrets (e.g., Great Egret and Snowy Egret), where they may benefit from prey flushed by more active species—particularly Snowy Egrets, which frequently stir, run, and chase prey. The white plumage is thought to aid feeding in mixed-species groups, possibly by allowing juveniles to associate more closely with other egrets, though this function is not fully established. As they mature, birds pass through a patchy blue-and-white (“calico”) phase before attaining the adult slate-blue plumage. Caroni, Cuffie River and Little Tobago.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* — Active, fast-moving feeder; often stirs prey. Millennium Park, Caroni, Bon Accord.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* — Yellow feet used to stir prey. Millennium Park and Caroni.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* — Mangrove specialist; observed on Trinidad. Notable for bait-fishing, a clear example of tool use: the bird may drop small items (insects, feathers, bread, or plant fragments) onto the water surface to attract fish, then strike when prey approach the “bait.”

Green Heron *Butorides virescens* — Similar to Striated but with a rich rufous neck; observed on Tobago. Also well known for bait-fishing behavior, using small objects to lure fish within striking range.

Western Cattle-Egret *Bubulcus ibis* — Frequently follows livestock and machinery because their movement flushes insects and other small prey (grasshoppers, flies, frogs) from the vegetation. The egret exploits this disturbance, feeding on prey that would otherwise be hidden or harder to capture—an efficient commensal strategy. Less dependent on aquatic habitats than most other egrets. Observed often on the tour.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* — Large white heron with a tall, elegant profile; hunts with a slow, deliberate stalking gait punctuated by rapid spear-thrusts at fish and amphibians. Typically forages in shallow water but also takes insects, crustaceans, and small reptiles on land. In breeding condition, develops delicate plumes (“aigrettes”) once prized in the plume trade, which drove the species to the brink of extinction in parts of its range.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi* — One distant individual observed at Caroni at dusk. A close South American counterpart to Great Blue Heron, very similar in size and structure (long-legged, heavy-billed, slow stalking hunter). Differs in having a crisper black-and-white head and neck pattern with a strong white throat and foreneck, sharper contrast overall, and generally lacks the warm rufous tones often seen on the neck and thighs of Great Blue Heron. Ecology and behavior are essentially parallel—large solitary hunter of fish and other aquatic prey in wetlands.

PELICANS — Pelecanidae (1)

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* — Seen along Tobago coast; often flying in synchronized lines. Plunge-diving specialist.

NEW WORLD VULTURES — Cathartidae (2)

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* — Common scavenger on Trinidad; highly social.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* — Soars with wings held in a shallow V; relies heavily on an exceptionally keen sense of smell to locate carrion. The tropical subspecies in Trinidad differs from northern birds in its yellowish-white nape. Both vulture species are notably absent on Tobago.

OSPREY — Pandionidae (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* — Fish specialist; equipped with a reversible outer toe (zygodactyl grip) and spiny foot pads to secure slippery prey. One observed at Millennium Park carrying a fish head-first to reduce aerodynamic drag in flight. Widely distributed and strongly migratory, linking northern breeding grounds with tropical and subtropical wintering areas.

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES — Accipitridae (11)

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* — Seen at Bajnath Estate and Blanchisseuse; unmistakable forked tail.

Long-winged Harrier *Circus buffoni* — Observed quartering marsh at Nariva; facial disk aids hearing.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea* — One seen perched on wire and another perched on branch eating rodent en route to Bajnath Estate; orange wing panels visible in flight.

Common Black Hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus* — Mangrove specialist feeding on crabs. Observed flying at Hacienda Jacana and perched at Nariva.

Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis* — Open-country raptor; often takes snakes. Seen at Aripo Savanna and Nariva.

Great Black Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga* — Seen at Cuffie River and Main Ridge; heavy-bodied raptor of forest edges, rivers, and wetlands. One observed at Main Ridge eating a crab—crabs and other aquatic prey are important in its diet. Will occasionally take birds such as chachalacas.

White Hawk *Pseudastur albicollis* — Striking white plumage; specializes on reptiles. One flew close overhead when we stopped en route to Bajnath Estate to watch a Plumbeous Kite.

Gray-lined Hawk *Buteo nitidus* — Forest-edge perch hunter; fine barring visible. Perched bird seen well on Blanchisseuse Road near Asa Wright.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* — Migratory forest hawk; seen soaring from viewpoint atop Blanchisseuse Road.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* — Seen on Blanchisseuse Road; mimics Turkey Vulture in silhouette and flight—an example of aggressive mimicry that allows it to approach prey without triggering alarm. Diagnostic features include a bold white tail band and yellow cere/lores.

Short-tailed Hawk *Buteo brachyurus* (PT) — Observed soaring over Pax during pre-tour birding. Notable for its two distinct color morphs (dark and light), which can look like entirely different species; both morphs often hunt by soaring high and dropping in swift, direct stoops on small birds and reptiles.

OWLS — Strigidae (1)

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum* — After an extended search at Hacienda Jacana, one was observed being mobbed by a mixed flock. A small, diurnal owl of open woodland; rapid whistled call often betrays its presence.

TROGONS — Trogonidae (3)

Green-backed Trogon *Trogon viridis* — Largest of the three regional trogons; male with emerald mantle and blue eye-ring seen on Blanchisseuse Road. Sit-and-wait insect hunter.

Guianan Trogon *Trogon violaceus* — Observed at Asa Wright and Blanchisseuse Road; male's violet sheen and yellow eye-ring striking in good light.

Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris* — Excellent views of a male on Blanchisseuse Road; also heard in Main Ridge. The only trogon on Tobago.

MOTMOTS — Momotidae (1)

Trinidad Motmot *Momotus bahamensis* (E) — Seen well at Adventure Farm and repeatedly at Cuffie

River. Racket-tipped tail formed by natural feather wear, often accentuated by deliberate preening (barb removal) to create a strong visual signal.

KINGFISHERS — Alcedinidae (3)

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata* — Crow-sized kingfisher; the largest kingfisher in the Americas and among the largest in the world. One seen diving at Millennium Park.

American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea* — Observed flying back and forth beneath a bridge at Nariva. Tiny forest-stream specialist; smallest kingfisher in the Americas.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana* (PT) — Seen by some group members pre-tour at the Wildfowl Trust; small, compact kingfisher of freshwater edges, often perching low over the water before darting out to take small fish.

JACAMARS — Galbulidae (1)

Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda* — Iridescent green above with rufous underparts; typically perches quietly, then sallies out to capture flying insects. Males show a white throat, while females have a buff throat. Known to take wasps and other stinging prey, often beating them against a perch to remove the stinger before swallowing. Observed multiple times, including subduing butterfly and dragonfly prey at Hacienda Jacana.

TOUCANS — Ramphastidae (1)

Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus* — Daily canopy species at Asa Wright. Large but lightweight bill aids fruit handling, thermoregulation, and occasional nest predation. Only toucan in Trinidad; none on Tobago.

WOODPECKERS — Picidae (5)

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus* — Regular at Tobago feeders; present on Tobago but absent from Trinidad.

Red-rumped Woodpecker *Veniliornis kirkii* — Seen at Adventure Farm; small, quiet, and easily overlooked in the mid-canopy.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos* — Two seen in and around nesting cavity in snag en route to Trinidad airport. Large and striking; member of the same genus as the likely extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*).

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* — Seen well at Asa Wright; parallel white lines down the back diagnostic, contrasting with the V-shaped pattern formed by the scapular stripes in Crimson-crested.

Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus* — Observed at Hacienda Jacana; often associated with Cecropia, where it excavates nest cavities in softer wood.

FALCONS — Falconidae (2)

Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus* — Intelligent scavenger; seen well in Trinidad, both perched and in flight.

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima* — Frequently observed; feeds on carrion and parasites. On Tobago, fills scavenging niche in absence of vultures.

PARROTS — Psittacidae (5)

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* — Seen at Asa Wright; soft wheezy calls and distinctive blue head.

Orange-winged Amazon *Amazona amazonica* — Common on both islands; loud, social, and conspicuous. The “orange wing” refers to a bright orange patch on the inner wing (secondary feathers), usually hidden at rest but flashing in flight. Member of the genus *Amazona*, a group of robust

Neotropical parrots characterized by short, square tails, strong hooked bills, predominantly green plumage with localized color accents, and highly social, vocal behavior; many form communal roosts and are important seed predators and dispersers in tropical forests.

Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerinus* — Tiny parrot of open habitats; seen well at Aripo Savanna, apparently nest prospecting on a power pole. Readily uses cavities in termite nests, tree holes, and human structures; small, fast-flying, and often in tight, chattering groups.

Red-bellied Macaw *Orthopsittaca manilata* — Observed nesting in a Royal Palm snag at Hacienda Jacana; strongly tied to Moriche Palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*), feeding on the fruits and nesting in dead palm cavities—distribution closely tracks this palm. Among the smaller macaws. Macaws (large New World parrots) are defined by long tails, powerful hooked bills, and generally bare facial skin; the bare cheek patches likely aid in heat dissipation and allow for visual signaling (flushing with blood during social interactions).

Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* (I) — A wild pair observed pre-tour at the Wildfowl Trust and a flyover at Nariva. Formerly extirpated from Trinidad; reintroduced at Nariva and now breeding. eBird designates this species as Introduced because the current population derives from human-mediated reintroduction, even though the species is native to the region historically. Strongly associated with Moriche and Royal Palms for food and nesting. Our local guide Dave Ramlal participated in the reintroduction, bringing birds from Guyana for release at Nariva.

ANTBIRDS AND ALLIES — Thamnophilidae (7)

Great Antshrike *Taraba major* — Skulky but striking; glimpsed on Blanchisseuse Road, showing bold black-and-white pattern (red eye not seen).

Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus canadensis* — Pair seen at Nariva; strongly sexually dimorphic.

Barred Antshrike *Thamnophilus doliatus* — Heard frequently and seen several times. Strongly sexually dimorphic; both sexes seen side-by-side at Asa Wright, with the male black-and-white (“jailbird”) and the female rich rufous. Pairs perform coordinated duets, with loud, ringing notes often accelerating into a rapid series—giving a sharp, laughing quality.

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis* (H) — Heard in Main Ridge forest; foliage-gleaning insectivore.

Northern White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora intermedia* (H) — Tobago-only; heard near Cuffie River, typical of scrub and edge.

Silvered Antbird *Sclateria naevia* — Seen at Grand Riviere after diligent searching; understory skulker that may attend army-ant swarms facultatively, but not dependent.

White-bellied Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes* (H) — Heard at Asa Wright; shy, terrestrial understory species. Song a clear, descending series of whistles. A facultative army-ant follower, not an obligate swarm attendant.

OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS — Furnariidae (9)

Gray-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis* — Rarely seen species; but we enjoyed excellent views at Main Ridge. Terrestrial leaf-litter specialist, foraging by flipping leaves with strong legs while bracing with the tail; nests in burrows excavated into banks.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus* — Tobago species; small and relatively plain. Notably variable across its wide range and likely a complex of multiple cryptic species. Forages in a woodpecker-like manner along trunks and branches, using a stiffened tail to brace against the substrate—an example of convergent evolution, as woodcreepers are not closely related to woodpeckers.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* — Seen at Asa Wright. A regular follower of army-ant swarms, taking flushed insects low on trunks and near the ground. Unlike many woodcreepers, often forages without strong tail support.

Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus susurrans* — Deep forest species; seen at Cuffie River. Gives a clear,

whistled, descending series of notes, often accelerating slightly—a useful cue for locating this canopy and midstory climber.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper *Dendroplex picus* — Mangrove specialist seen at Caroni. Unusual among woodcreepers in its frequent use of open and semi-open habitats; forages by probing bark, crevices, and dead wood for insects and other arthropods.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii* — Observed at Hacienda Jacana; a small, slender woodcreeper of more open woodland and edge habitats.

Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans* (PT) — Tiny bark specialist; seen pre-tour at Wildfowl Trust. Distinctive upturned bill and highly active foraging behavior, often moving along branches and twigs more like a chickadee or kinglet than a typical woodcreeper.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomeus* — Marsh species seen at Aripo Savanna, along with two nests. Builds large, conspicuous stick nests in wetland vegetation, often reused or added onto.

Stripe-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis cinnamomea* — Seen well at Adventure Farm. Typically forages in pairs; vocalizations consist of repeated, sharp two-note phrases often given persistently. Like many spinetails, pairs may call in close coordination, helping maintain contact and territory.

MANAKINS — Pipridae (3)

Blue-backed Manakin *Chiroxiphia pareola* — Lek observed in Main Ridge. Males perform cooperative displays, with subordinate “helpers” assisting an alpha male in highly synchronized dances; helpers may eventually inherit or take over a display court. The only manakin species on Tobago.

White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus* — Active lek at Asa Wright; distinctive mechanical wing snaps produced by modified wing feathers during rapid jumps between saplings. Males maintain and meticulously clear small display courts on the forest floor.

Golden-headed Manakin *Ceratopira erythrocephala* — Seen feeding on *Miconia* fruit. Like other manakins, primarily frugivorous and an important seed disperser, swallowing fruits whole and passing seeds intact, often depositing them away from the parent plant.

COTINGAS — Cotingidae (1)

Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano* — One of the loudest birds on Earth; metallic, bell-like call heard at Asa Wright, with males calling from exposed canopy perches. Adult males bear long, black, hair-like wattles (“beard”) at the base of the bill, used in display; females lack wattles and are much duller. Calls have been measured at ~116–125 dB at close range, comparable to a rock concert or chainsaw (~110–120 dB) and approaching the intensity of a jet engine at distance (~120–130 dB). The only cotinga in Trinidad and Tobago.

TITYRAS AND ALLIES — Tityridae (2)

Black-tailed Tityra *Tityra cayana* — Seen at Hacienda Jacana and Asa Wright. Stocky, large-headed canopy bird with a thick, hooked bill; overall pale with a contrasting black wings and tail; bare reddish orbital skin around the eye and red bill base. Often perches conspicuously, sallying for fruit or insects.

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus* — Male seen well on Blanchisseuse Road near Asa Wright. Dark gray bird with bold white wing markings (male); builds distinctive pendant, woven nests that hang from branch tips. Although becards can resemble flycatchers in shape and behavior, genetic studies place them in the same family as tityras, illustrating how evolutionary relationships are not always reflected in outward appearance.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS — Tyrannidae (19)

White-throated Spadebill *Platyrrinchus mystaceus* (H) — Heard in Main Ridge; tiny, flat-billed understory species.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleagineus* — Seen well at Cuffie River; frugivorous tyrant of shaded forest midstory.

Ochre-ored Flatbill *Tolmomyias flaviventris* — Broad-billed aerial insectivore; seen at Hacienda Jacana and Cuffie River.

Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii* — Seen at Grand Riviere and Blanchisseuse Road; lacks obvious crest typical of elaenias.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* — Common open-country species; seen at Aripo Savanna, Cuffie River, Adventure Farm, and Little Tobago.

Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus euleri* — Seen well perched along Blanchisseuse Road. Small and fairly delicate; plain gray-brown above, pale below with a faint dusky breast wash, thin pale eyering, and a relatively fine bill. Shows buffy wingbars that can appear conspicuous in good light. Often sits quietly on a low to mid-level perch, making short sallies for insects.

Northern Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus* — Seen at Grand Riviere; soft, mournful, whistled call. Slender, long-winged silhouette with a peaked crown and narrow bill; typically hawks insects from exposed perches.

Fuscous Flycatcher *Cnemotriccus fuscatus* — Seen well at Adventure Farm; small, plain forest flycatcher with characteristic tail flicking. Shows pale wingbars and a faint pale eyebrow (supercilium). The name “fuscous” means dark, dusky, or somber brown, reflecting its overall subdued, gray-brown coloration.

White-headed Marsh Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala* — Seen at Aripo Savanna; striking black-and-white plumage; pair observed nest building.

Pied Water-Tyrant *Fluvicola pica* — Seen multiple times on Trinidad; wetland specialist with high-contrast black-and-white pattern.

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus* (**H**) — Heard from Asa Wright verandah; large, powerful flycatcher more often heard than seen.

Venezuelan Flycatcher *Myiarchus venezuelensis* — Tobago species replacing Dusky-capped; seen well at Main Ridge with multiple birds in the open. Best separated from overlapping Brown-crested Flycatcher by voice.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* — Seen at Cuffie River; loud “wheep” call.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus* — Common and vocal; classic “kis-ka-dee” call heard frequently.

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua* — Seen well at Hacienda Jacana; larger bill and heavier build than Great Kiskadee; lacks rufous in wings and tail.

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus* — Seen at Pax, Hacienda Jacana, and Cuffie River; bold streaking and larger bill than Piratic.

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus* — Seen several times on Trinidad; named for habit of taking over nests of other birds.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* — Abundant in open habitats; aggressive aerial pursuer; seen daily.

Gray Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* — Common on Tobago; coastal species lacking white tail band of Eastern Kingbird; heavier bill.

VIREOS — Vireonidae (4)

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* — Loud, musical canopy species; seen at Hacienda Jacana in mixed flock mobbing pygmy-owl.

Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes* — Occurs on Tobago and mainland South America but not Trinidad; seen at Bon Accord in dry-edge habitat. The Tobago population is distinct and often treated as the subspecies *insularis*; it has been suggested as a potential future split.

Golden-fronted Greenlet *Pachysylvia aurantiifrons* — Seen on Blanchisseuse Road; canopy foliage-gleaner.

Chivi Vireo *Vireo chivi* — Heard frequently; glimpsed at several sites. Formerly treated as part of the Red-eyed Vireo complex (*Vireo olivaceus*); now recognized as a separate species based on differences in voice, genetics, and range. Essentially the South American counterpart, with similar appearance but distinct vocalizations.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS — Hirundinidae (5)

White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer* — Common over wetlands; white wing patches and rump flash in flight.

Caribbean Martin *Progne dominicensis* — Seen perched on wires on Tobago; very similar structurally to Purple Martin. Males show a rich bluish-purple gloss with a paler belly, giving a more colorful, higher-contrast look than Gray-breasted Martin on Trinidad.

Gray-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea* — Common in Trinidad; often around towns; seen well perched on wires. Paler gray underparts and less saturated gloss than Caribbean Martin.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* — Seen perched and in flight; warm tawny throat and dusky breast band help separate it from Northern Rough-winged Swallow, which is typically plainer and colder-toned below.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — Migrant seen at Centre Street Ponds. Nearly cosmopolitan, breeding across North America, Europe, and Asia and wintering in the tropics worldwide. Males show iridescent structural coloration (blue gloss) that can reflect into the UV spectrum, likely playing a role in mate selection.

GNATWRENS — Polioptilidae (1)

Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus* — Tiny, long-billed understory insectivore specializing in dense tangles; seen at Hacienda Jacana. Moves deliberately through vine clusters, probing curled leaves and suspended debris for insects.

WRENS — Troglodytidae (1)

Southern House Wren *Troglodytes musculus* — Common around buildings; lively and musical song.

MOCKINGBIRDS — Mimidae (1)

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus* — Common in open and semi-open habitats; a versatile mimic with a long tail. Shows bold white tail tips; compared to Northern Mockingbird, it lacks the large, flashing white wing panels and overall appears plainer in flight.

THRUSHES — Turdidae (4)

Yellow-legged Thrush *Turdus flavipes* — Main Ridge specialty; typically a secretive forest-interior species, often heard more than seen. More arboreal than many other *Turdus* thrushes, frequently foraging in the subcanopy as well as on the ground. Males glossy black with bright yellow legs, orbital ring, and bill; females browner. At Main Ridge, one normal and one leucistic individual showing abnormal pale plumage observed.

White-necked Thrush *Turdus albicollis* — Frequent singer at Asa Wright and Main Ridge; seen well along Blanchisseuse Road. Gives a rich, fluted, far-carrying song, often from shaded perches. The amount of white varies across its range; in Trinidad and Tobago, birds typically show a clean white throat and upper breast forming a bold patch that contrasts with the darker upperparts.

Cocoa Thrush *Turdus fumigatus* — Plain brown thrush with a warm, mellow, whistled song; seen multiple times. Often forages quietly in the understory, flicking leaves and probing for insects and fruit.

Spectacled Thrush *Turdus nudigenis* — Common; bold yellow orbital ring (“spectacles”) diagnostic. Adaptable and often seen in more open habitats, feeding on fruits, insects, and human scraps.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS — Fringillidae (2)

Trinidad Euphonia *Euphonia trinitatis* — One male at Asa Wright feeders; best separated from Violaceous by the dark (blackish) throat and upper breast, which contrasts with the bright yellow belly.

Violaceous Euphonia *Euphonia violacea* — Common at feeders; male with rich violet-purple upperparts and bright yellow underparts, including a yellow throat, separating it from Trinidad Euphonia. Female dull olive-green above with yellow below.

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS — Icteridae (8)

Red-breasted Meadowlark *Leistes militaris* — Seen well at Aripo Savanna; male with bright red breast and contrasting darker upperparts; often sings from exposed perches in open grassland.

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* — Colonial nester with long, pendulous woven nests. Voice a distinctive liquid, gurgling cascade; males perform a bowing display, tipping forward while calling, and are larger than females.

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* — Nesting colony at Brasso Seco; bright blue eyes and striking yellow rump. Builds hanging nests in groups, often near wasp nests for protection.

Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis* — Seen building hanging nests in the Aripo–Nariva region; weaves long, suspended nests from fibers. Bright plumage yellow contrasts with black mask, throat and bib.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* — Common brood parasite; seen well at Adventure Farm. Male glossy black with a violet-blue sheen in good light.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* — Observed on both islands; brood parasite specializing on oropendolas and caciques. Shows a bright red eye and an upright, alert posture.

Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris* — Common and adaptable; bright yellow eye and iridescent dark plumage; often in noisy groups around human habitation.

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Chrysomus icterocephalus* — Large flocks observed near Caroni; males striking with bright yellow head and black body, associated with marshes and wetlands.

WARBLERS — Parulidae (3)

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* — Seen at Asa Wright; tail-wagging wetland forager. A Nearctic–Neotropical migrant, breeding in North America and wintering in the tropics; individuals may linger locally outside peak migration.

Northern Yellow Warbler *Setophaga aestiva* (PT) — Seen pre-tour at Wildfowl Trust. Recently split from Mangrove Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), which is now treated as a separate tropical species; Northern Yellow Warbler refers to the migratory North American group.

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus* — Seen along Blanchisseuse Road; resident understory species of forested habitats; does not migrate.

TANAGERS AND ALLIES — Thraupidae (21)

Masked Cardinal *Paroaria nigrogenis* (PT) — Stunning tricolored bird seen pre-tour; bold red head, white underparts, and black mask and upperparts. Despite the name, a tanager, not a true cardinal.

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* — Seen at Hacienda Jacana and Blanchisseuse; male black with a bold white shoulder patch; typically avoids feeders compared to White-lined.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* — Common at feeders; males black, females cinnamon; white wing stripe of male often hidden when perched but flashes clearly in flight or wing-flicking.

Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo* — Common but striking; males deep wine-red appearing almost black in low light, with a large silvery bill.

Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* — Very common; locally “Blue Jean”; Tobago birds often appear a deeper, richer blue.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* — Common around buildings and palms; locally “Kaki Jean”; plain

olive-gray with subtle scaling.

Turquoise Tanager *Tangara mexicana* — Seen well on Blanchisseuse Road; vividly colored canopy species, blue above and yellow below with a mottled, “paint-splashed” look.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola* — Seen from verandah at Asa Wright and on Blanchisseuse Road. Bright green body with blue tones; chestnut head.

Swallow Tanager *Tersina viridis* — Females observed; greenish overall with paler underparts; attractively patterned but lacking the male’s turquoise-blue. Austral migrant, breeding in southern South America and moving north to places like Trinidad during the austral winter.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* — Seen in mixed flocks; males bright blue with black mask and back; females greenish with bluish head tones.

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* — Frequent at feeders; long decurved bill; males rich purple-blue with black wings, females green above with streaked underparts.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus* — Not frequent at feeders in Trinidad and Tobago; seen in flowering trees; males deep blue with black mask and wings, bright red legs diagnostic; females green with dull red legs.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* — Common at Asa Wright; male blue-green with black hood and banana-yellow beak; females lime green with no mask.

Bicolored Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor* — Mangrove specialist seen at Nariva; small, gray above and whitish below with a slender, pointed bill suited for probing.

Saffron Finch *Sicalis flaveola* — Common near Millennium Park; bright yellow with orange tones on the face; expanding range, often associated with human-altered habitats.

Grassland Yellow-Finch *Sicalis luteola* — Seen at Aripo Savanna; smaller and paler than Saffron Finch, associated with open grasslands.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* — Displaying males observed; glossy blue-black; performs vertical “jumping” display flights (“Johnny Jump-Up”).

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis* — Seen well on Blanchisseuse Road; male with black head and throat contrasting with yellow underparts; female plain brownish.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* — Ubiquitous nectar feeder; many subspecies across its range; uses a curved bill to access nectar and sometimes acts as a pollinator, though it can also rob nectar by piercing flowers.

Black-faced Grassquit *Melanospiza bicolor* — Found in Tobago dry scrub; not on Trinidad. Thick bill for grass seeds. Seen well at Fort James park.

Olive-gray Saltator *Saltator olivascens* — Edge and garden bird. Seen at Aripo with its short white eyebrow glowing among the tree shadows.

NON-AVIAN TAXA

CHORDATES (Phylum Chordata)

VERTEBRATES (Subphylum Vertebrata)

MAMMALS (Class Mammalia) (13 + 1 domesticated)

RODENTS (Order Rodentia)

Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis* — Observed in both Trinidad and Tobago. A canopy acrobat feeding on fruits, seeds, and flowers; by carrying and caching food, it helps move seeds through the forest and contributes to regeneration.

Red-rumped Agouti *Dasyprocta leporina* — Seen around the grounds at Asa Wright. A keystone seed disperser—often buries nuts and fruits for later, forgetting some and inadvertently planting the next generation of trees.

Capibara *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris* — Seen fleetingly at Caroni. The world’s largest rodent, closely tied to wetlands.

BATS (Order Chiroptera) Identified Visually

SAC-WINGED BATS (Family Emballonuridae)

Greater Sac-winged Bat *Saccopteryx bilineata* — Frequently seen flying in daylight on Trinidad; a social species with high-pitched chatter. Males defend small harem territories on vertical surfaces. “Sac-winged” refers to scent pouches on the forearms used in courtship and territorial marking.

LEAF-NOSED BATS (Family Phyllostomidae)

Jamaican Fruit Bat *Artibeus jamaicensis* — Seen flying at dawn and dusk and day-roosting at Cuffie River; observed carrying fruit back to roosts. A major disperser of figs and other fruits, key to shaping Neotropical forests. Possesses a fleshy noseleaf that helps focus echolocation calls.

Leaf-nosed bats are often under-detected acoustically because they use low-intensity, short-range echolocation suited to cluttered habitats, rather than loud calls that carry long distances.

Pallas’s Long-tongued Bat *Glossophaga soricina* — Seen at hummingbird feeders at Asa Wright at night; nectar specialist with an elongated tongue adapted for tubular flowers; important pollinator. Has a noseleaf typical of the family.

Tent-making Bat *Uroderma bilobatum* — Observed at Bajnath Estate, including adults with young. Frugivorous species that cuts leaf veins to create folded “tents” used as sheltered day roosts; also a leaf-nosed bat.

BATS (Order Chiroptera) Identified Acoustically with Echo Meter Touch 2 Device

SAC-WINGED BATS (Family Emballonuridae)

Lesser Dog-like Bat *Peropteryx macrotis* — Cuffie River; small, fast-flying insectivore that roosts in sheltered cavities such as hollow trees and culverts.

Northern Ghost Bat *Diclidurus albus* — Cuffie River; pale, fast-flying bat of open airspaces. After acoustic detection, pale bats—likely this species—were seen flying at night near lodge lights.

FREE-TAILED BATS (Family Molossidae)

Velvety Free-tailed Bat *Molossus molossus* — Asa Wright and Cuffie River; fast, high-flying insectivore; often roosts in buildings and hollow structures (including behind a picture in the Cuffie River dining room).

Molossus sp. (mastiff bat) — Asa Wright and Cuffie River; powerful aerial insectivore hunting above the canopy; acoustic detections likely represent this genus, but species-level ID uncertain.

Big Crested Mastiff Bat *Promops centralis* — Cuffie River; high-altitude, fast-flying molossid.

Mexican Free-tailed Bat *Tadarida brasiliensis* — Cuffie River; long-distance flyer, often foraging high overhead.

EVEN-TOED HOOFED MAMMALS (Order Artiodactyla)

Buffalypso (domestic water buffalo breed) — Developed in Trinidad from crosses among water buffalo types. Hardy, heat-tolerant, and well adapted to muddy tropical conditions; an example of local agricultural innovation. Observed at Aripo Savanna.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (10 + 1 deceased)

REPTILES (Class Reptilia)

CROCODYLIANS (Order Crocodylia)

Spectacled Caiman *Caiman crocodilus* — Seen at Hacienda Jacana and Caroni Swamp. Named for the bony ridge between the eyes resembling spectacles; adaptable and common in both fresh and brackish waters.

TURTLES (Order Testudines)

LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLES (Class Dermochelyidae)

Leatherback Sea Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* — Observed at Grand Riviere emerging from the sea, laying eggs, and returning to the ocean. The largest living turtle, reaching well over 1,000 pounds. Unique in lacking a hard, scuted shell, instead having a flexible, leathery carapace with longitudinal ridges. Highly migratory, capable of transoceanic movements and deep dives (>3,000 ft), aided by adaptations for cold water including large body size and countercurrent heat exchange. A specialist on gelatinous prey such as jellyfish, playing an important role in controlling their populations.

HARD-SHELLED SEA TURTLES (Class Cheloniidae)

Hawksbill Sea Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* — Seen swimming near Little Tobago. A reef-associated species feeding largely on sponges, with a narrow, hawk-like bill used to extract prey from crevices; shell composed of overlapping (imbricated) scutes.

SCALED REPTILES (Order Squamata)

LIZARDS (Suborder Lacertilia)

GECKOS (Family Gekkonidae)

Tropical House Gecko *Hemidactylus mabouia* — Introduced; common around buildings, hunting insects near lights.

Northern Turniptail Gecko *Thecadactylus rapicauda* — Large nocturnal gecko observed at Cuffie River; named for its swollen, turnip-shaped tail; capable of loud vocalizations.

Wiegmann's Striped Gecko *Gonatodes vittatus* — Small diurnal gecko seen at Hacienda Jacana; males often more boldly patterned.

ANOLES (Family Dactyloidae)

Grenada Tree Anole (Richard's Anole) *Anolis richardii* — Observed at Fort James; a large introduced species on Tobago; males display a bright orange dewlap and shift color from green to brown.

Tropidurid Lizards (Family Tropiduridae)

Caribbean Treerunner *Plica caribeana* — Seen from verandah at Asa Wright; a well-camouflaged trunk specialist, often hugging bark surfaces.

Whiptails and Ameivas (Family Teiidae)

Trinidad Ameiva *Ameiva atrigularis* — Fast, ground-dwelling lizard seen at Asa Wright and Cuffie River; active forager in open sunny areas.

SKINKS (Family Scincidae)

Lesser Antillean Skink *Marisora aurulae* (often listed as *Mabuya aurulae*) — Reported at Asa Wright; small, sleek, bronze-brown with a glossy sheen and faint lateral striping; active ground and low-vegetation forager; live-bearing (viviparous).

SNAKES (Suborder Serpentes)

BOAS (Family Boidae)

Boa Constrictor *Boa constrictor* — Dead adult seen in Arima Valley with aborted young; a large, primarily terrestrial constrictor; viviparous, giving birth to live young. Possesses heat-sensing pits along the jaws, though less developed than in many arboreal boas.

Trinidad Tree Boa (Ruschenberger's Tree Boa) *Corallus ruschenbergerii* — Seen coiled above water in Caroni Swamp; arboreal, with a prehensile tail and well-developed heat-sensing pits adapted for detecting and precisely targeting warm-blooded prey in dense, low-light forest canopies.

AMPHIBIANS (Class Amphibia)

FROGS (Order Anura)

RAIN FROGS (Family Eleutherodactylidae)

Lesser Antillean Whistling Frog *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei* — Abundant nighttime caller; direct-developing with no tadpole stage; eggs hatch into miniature frogs. Heard often at Asa Wright; one tiny individual seen on a night walk.

CRYPTIC FOREST FROGS (Family Aromobatidae)

Trinidad Stream Frog *Mannophryne trinitatis* — Endemic; males guard eggs and transport tadpoles to water; associated with clear forest streams.

TRUE TOADS (Family Bufonidae)

Cane Toad *Rhinella marina* — Seen at Grand Riviere and Asa Wright; native to the region but globally notorious as an invasive species where introduced. Possesses large parotoid glands that secrete toxins as defense.

FISH (Superclass Pisces — informal grouping)

RAY-FINNED FISHES (Class Actinopterygii)

KILLIFISHES (Order Cyprinodontiformes)

Jumping Guabine *Anablepsoides hartii* — Observed in a stream in the Main Ridge rainforest of Tobago. Small killifish capable of leaping out of water and moving across damp surfaces to reach nearby pools. Tolerates low-oxygen conditions; can utilize atmospheric oxygen at the surface and survive briefly out of water via gas exchange across gills and moist skin.

PERCH-LIKE FISHES (Order Perciformes)

Reef Fishes (Caribbean assemblage) — Angel Reef viewed through glass-bottom boat revealed a typical community, including parrotfishes (*Scaridae*), Blue Tang (*Acanthuridae*), wrasses (*Labridae*), butterflyfishes (*Chaetodontidae*), and trumpetfish (*Aulostomidae*).

CNIDARIANS (Phylum Cnidaria)

CORALS AND ANEMONES (Subphyla Anthozoa)

STONY CORALS (Order Scleractinia)

Boulder Brain Coral *Colpophyllia natans* — Large reef-building coral observed at Angel Reef; forms massive, grooved colonies resembling a brain. A key Caribbean framework species, contributing to reef structure and habitat complexity. Hosts symbiotic zooxanthellae that fuel calcification and reef growth via photosynthesis.

SOFT CORALS (Order Alcyonacea)

Common Sea Fan *Gorgonia ventalina* — Large, fan-shaped gorgonian seen at Angel Reef, typically oriented perpendicular to prevailing currents to maximize plankton capture. Unlike stony corals, it has a flexible proteinaceous skeleton (gorgonin) that allows it to bend with surge. Feeds by extending polyps to filter plankton from the water column; also hosts symbiotic zooxanthellae, making it both a suspension feeder and photosymbiotic.

ARTHROPODS (Phylum Arthropoda)

CRUSTACEANS (Subphylum Crustacea)

True Crabs (Infraorder Brachyura)

FRESHWATER LAND CRABS (Family Pseudothelphusidae)

Manicou Crab *Eudaniela garmani* — Freshwater/terrestrial stream crab seen at Asa Wright and Main Ridge. Females brood eggs and young beneath the abdomen, releasing fully formed

juvenile crabs rather than free-swimming marine larvae—an adaptation allowing a complete life cycle on land. The name “manicou” (local Creole for opossum) reflects this brood-carrying behavior, analogous to a pouch.

FIDDLER CRABS (Family Ocypodidae)

Fiddler Crab *Minuca/Uca* sp. — Seen in roadside ditches at Bon Accord; males wave an enlarged claw in display. Deposit feeders, processing mud to extract organic material in brackish margins.

MANGROVE TREE CRABS (Family Sesarmidae)

Mangrove Tree Crab *Aratus pisonii* — Observed climbing Red Mangrove prop roots at Nariva and Caroni; agile and semi-arboreal, feeding on leaves, algae, and detritus.

ARACHNIDS (Class Arachnida)

SPIDERS (Order Araneae)

TARANTULAS (Family Theraphosidae)

Pink-toed Tarantula *Avicularia avicularia* — A dead specimen seen at Hacienda Jacana; an arboreal tarantula with pink-tipped legs. Rather than spinning prey-capture webs, tarantulas rely on ambush and rapid strikes.

Trinidad Chevron Tarantula *Psalmopoeus cambridgei* — Found on pipe railings at Asa Wright at night; a large arboreal species endemic to Trinidad. Compounds in its venom are being studied for potential medical applications, particularly in pain management and neurology, and as tools in biomedical research—including investigations into cancer cell behavior.

JUMPING SPIDERS (Family Salticidae)

Jumping Spider (sp. unidentified) — Observed on a restaurant window in Sangre Grande. Small, active hunters with large forward-facing eyes and exceptional vision—the best among spiders, capable of resolving fine detail and tracking moving prey. Uses visual stalking and precise leaps to capture insects, secured by a silk dragline. Noted for relatively advanced cognition among invertebrates, including problem-solving and route-planning behaviors demonstrated in experimental settings. Frequently found on walls and windows where lights attract prey.

HARVESTMEN (Order Opiliones)

Harvestmen (Daddy Longlegs) — Seen in numbers on Asa Wright night walks, glowing under UV; spiderlike but not true spiders, lacking venom and silk, with a compact fused body and scavenging habits.

INSECTS (Class Insecta)

TERMITES (Order Blattodea)

Arboreal Termites *Nasutitermes* sp. — Large carton nests seen high in trees; soldiers defend with chemical sprays; nests are often excavated by trogons and other birds for nesting.

ANTS, WASPS AND ALLIES (Order Hymenoptera)

Leafcutter Ants *Atta* sp. — Workers carry leaf fragments to underground fungus gardens, an advanced agricultural system evolved tens of millions of years ago.

Azteca Ants *Azteca* sp. — Observed in carton nests in trees, often associated with Cecropia. Many species form a well-known mutualism with Cecropia trees, nesting in hollow stems and aggressively defending their host against herbivores and encroaching vegetation. Colonies may also construct carton nests externally.

Army Ants *Eciton* sp. — Seen fanning out from a column along Blanchisseuse Road; nomadic predators that form living bivouacs from interlinked bodies to house the colony. Their raids flush vast numbers of insects and small vertebrates, creating feeding opportunities for birds:

- Obligate ant-followers — Species that depend on army ant swarms for foraging and track them regularly, often traveling from swarm to swarm. They are behaviorally and ecologically specialized for this niche and feed primarily on prey fleeing the ants.
- Facultative followers — Generalist species that take advantage of swarms opportunistically but do not depend on them. They continue to forage independently when ants are absent and include a wide range of birds— woodcreepers, flycatchers, wrens, and others.

Blue Tarantula Hawk *Pepsis* sp. — Striking metallic blue wasp seen at Cuffie River; females paralyze spiders and provision a single larva with the still-living host.

BEE TL ES (Order Coleoptera)

CLICK BEE TL ES (Family Elateridae)

Bioluminescent Click Beetle — Observed glowing at night at Asa Wright; possesses two lantern-like light organs on the thorax; produces light for communication and defense; also capable of a snapping “click” mechanism to flip upright when overturned.

LONGHORN BEE TL ES (Family Cerambycidae)

Rhinoceros Beetle — Observed in a glass jar at Hacienda Jacana before being released; robust, often with horn-like projections in males; larvae develop in decaying wood, playing an important role in decomposition.

Stick insects (Order Phasmatodea)

Stick Insects — Seen on night walks at Asa Wright; twig mimicry enhanced by slow “breeze-sway” movements that help them evade predators.

GRASSHOPPERS, CRICKETS AND KATYDIDS (Order Orthoptera)

GRASSHOPPERS AND LOCUSTS (Suborder Caelifera)

Large Grasshopper sp. — A very large locust-like insect seen at Pax; identification uncertain without closer views; powerful hind legs adapted for jumping and rapid escape.

KATYDIDS AND CRICKETS (Suborder Ensifera)

KATYDIDS (Family Tettigoniidae)

Katydid sp. — Heard and seen throughout the tour; one observed closely at Hacienda Jacana. Often leaf-mimicking with laterally flattened bodies and long antennae; many species nocturnal.

CRICKETS (Family Rhaphidophoridae)

Cave Crickets sp. — Observed on a night walk at Asa Wright; long antennae adapted for navigating darkness. Typically rely more on tactile and chemical cues than vision in low-light environments; wingless and often associated with caves, forest floor, and humid microhabitats.

BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS (Order Lepidoptera)

HAWK MOTHS (Family Sphingidae)

Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum* sp. — A day-flying sphinx moth hovering at Hacienda Jacana like a hummingbird; long proboscis for deep tubular flowers; pale abdominal band enhances the hummingbird-like impression.

SWALLOWTAILS (Family Papilionidae)

Cattleheart *Parides* sp. — Black with scarlet and white accents; larvae feed on *Aristolochia* (pipevine) and sequester toxins retained into adulthood.

WHITES, SULPURS, YELLOWS (Family Pieridae)

Various species — Numerous fast-flying whites and sulphurs, often puddling along wet paths; especially abundant at Brasso Seco.

BRUSH-FOOTED BUTTERFLIES (Family Nymphalidae)

Longwings (Subfamily Heliconiinae)

Postman *Heliconius melpomene* — Red-banded wings; one of the few butterflies that digests pollen, enabling long adult lifespans.

Morphos and Owls (Subfamily Morphinae)

Owl Butterfly *Caligo* spp. — Large, brown, dusk-active; prominent eyespots; feeds on rotting fruit.

Blue Morpho *Morpho menelaus* — Iridescent structural blue in flight; cryptic brown underside when wings are closed.

Satyrs and Allies (Subfamily Satyrinae)

Isodora Leafwing *Consul fabius* — Observed on fruit feeder at Bajnath Estate; exceptional dead-leaf mimic, nearly impossible to detect when perched with wings closed on bark or sticks; attracted to fermenting fruit.

Typical Brushfoots (Subfamily Nymphalinae)

Scarlet Peacock *Anartia amathea* — Common in sunny openings; males defend small territories.

White Peacock *Anartia jatrophae* — Pale with bold eyespots; often puddles at wet edges.

SKIPPERS (Family Hesperidae)

Various species — Small, rapid fliers with hooked antennae; frequent at forest edges and flowering hedges; abundant on purple vervain at Hacienda Jacana. An exceptionally striking dead specimen was found on the Little Tobago boat.

URANIA MOTHS (Family Uraniidae)

Green-banded Urania *Urania leilus* — A striking day-flying moth often mistaken for a butterfly, with iridescent green bands flashing against dark wings. Powered by structural coloration rather than pigment, these shimmering hues shift with the angle of light. Commonly seen moving swiftly along forest edges and clearings. Observed at Main Ridge.

PLANTS

NON-VASCULAR PLANTS (Bryophytes)

LIVERWORTS (Marchantiophyta)

Liverworts — Small, non-vascular plants observed coating trunks, rocks, and leaves at Asa Wright; among the earliest land plant lineages. Lacking true roots and vascular tissue, they rely on constant moisture and are most abundant in humid, shaded environments. Often forming thin, green mats or delicate leafy structures, they play an important role in retaining moisture and creating microhabitats for invertebrates.

VASCULAR PLANTS (Clade Tracheophytes)

FLOWERING PLANTS (Clade Angiosperms)

MONOCOTS

BROMELIADS (Family Bromeliaceae)

Bromeliads (multiple genera) — Abundant epiphytes on both islands; many form leaf “tanks” that collect water and organic debris, supporting frogs, insects, and miniature aquatic ecosystems; pollination varies by genus, including hummingbirds, bats, and insects.

Air Plant *Tillandsia* sp. — Epiphytic bromeliad observed in the Main Ridge rainforest with striking purple and red inflorescence; absorbs moisture and nutrients directly from the air via specialized scales; typically pollinated by hummingbirds or insects depending on species.

GINGERS (Family Zingiberaceae)

Torch Ginger *Etilingera elatior* — Brilliant inflorescences at Asa Wright; favored by hermit hummingbirds; primarily bird-pollinated.

Shampoo Ginger *Zingiber zerumbet* — Pinecone-like flower heads exude fragrant liquid; flowers typically pollinated by bees.

Beehive Ginger *Zingiber spectabile* — Distinctive honeycomb bracts; flowers pollinated by bees and other insects.

SPIRAL GINGERS (Family Costaceae)

Spiral Ginger *Costus* spp. — Native understory plants in Trinidad; spiraling stems and

tubular flowers rich in nectar; important nectar sources for hummingbirds, especially hermits, which follow traplines between flowering individuals.

HELICONIAS (Family Heliconiaceae)

Heliconia spp. — Key nectar plants for hermit hummingbirds; long, often curved bracts conceal the true flowers, tightly matched to decurved bills—a classic bird-pollinated system. Many species were observed throughout the tour, with evocative common names reflecting bract shape and form, including “lobster claw,” “parrot’s beak,” “chicken foot,” and “bird-of-paradise.”

AROIDS (Family Araceae)

Elephant Ear / Bird’s-nest Anthurium *Anthurium* sp. — Large-leaved aroid observed along the Little Tobago trail, growing both on the ground and as an epiphyte. Leaves form a rosette that traps falling leaf litter and moisture, creating a small, self-contained nutrient reservoir—an efficient adaptation in thin, nutrient-limited soils.

PALMS (Family Arecaceae)

Manicole Palm *Manicaria saccifera* — Large understory to subcanopy palm of wet lowland forests; produces sizable fruits dispersed by frugivores including Oilbirds; at Asa Wright, individuals grown from Dunston Cave seeds illustrate plant–bird mutualism and stewardship.

Royal Palm *Roystonea oleracea* — Tall emergent palm of lowland wetlands and savannas; important food source for Blue-and-yellow Macaw at Nariva, where birds feed on fruits and perch in crowns. Snag at Hacienda Jacana where Red-bellied Macaws appeared to be nesting was Royal Palm.

EUDICOTS

ANNATOS (Family Bixaceae)

Annatto / Achiote / Roucou *Bixa orellana* — Shrub or small tree producing spiny capsules filled with bright red seeds; source of annatto pigment widely used as a dye and food coloring; traditionally smeared on the skin/face for body paint and protection. Observed near Brasso Seco and smeared on skin.

MALLOWS (Family Malvaceae)

Ceiba / Kapok / Silk-cotton Tree *Ceiba pentandra* — Towering emergent with a massive buttressed trunk; large nocturnal flowers produce copious nectar and are primarily bat-pollinated, with additional insect visitors. Young trees are often armed with conical spines that deter climbing herbivores; as the tree matures and rises above browsing pressure, these spines are reduced or lost, reflecting a shift in energy allocation from defense to growth and reproduction once the trunk is out of reach.

SPURGES (Family Euphorbiaceae)

Sandbox Tree *Hura crepitans* — Large Neotropical tree with conical trunk spines. The common name “sandbox tree” comes from the historical use of its dried, hollowed fruits as containers for sand, once kept on desks for blotting ink. Its explosive fruits—giving rise to the name “dynamite tree”—detonate when dry, flinging seeds at high velocity. The milky

latex is toxic and caustic. Seeds are flattened and curved, sometimes described as dolphin-shaped; observed on the forest floor at Asa Wright, where Mukesh explained they are dried and used in jewelry and crafts.

LEGUMES (Fabaceae)

Monkey Ladder *Entada gigas* — Massive woody liana producing enormous, segmented seed pods; seeds are buoyant and can disperse long distances via ocean currents, often washing ashore far from their origin.

Immortelle / Flame Tree *Erythrina poeppigiana* — Brilliant coral-red flowers adapted for hummingbird pollination; nectar-rich and highly visible in the canopy. Native to northern South America, including the Amazon and Orinoco basins, and likely inland Venezuela, it was introduced to Trinidad in the 19th century as a shade tree for cacao plantations and is now widely naturalized.

Stinking Toe / Tonka Bean Tree *Dipteryx odorata* — Large tropical tree producing thick, woody pods containing a single seed; when ripe, the pulp emits a strong, musky odor—hence the name “stinking toe.” Brave naturalists sampled and sniffed the fruit at Pointe-à-Pierre Wildfowl Trust during the pre-tour. The seed (tonka bean) is aromatic, rich in coumarin, and used in perfumes and flavorings. Seeds are dispersed by large mammals like agouti attracted to the pulp.

COFFEE (Family Rubiaceae)

Hot Lips *Psychotria poeppigiana* — Bright red bracts surrounding small tubular flowers; primarily hummingbird-pollinated; bracts enhance visual attraction.

Chaconia / Wild Poinsettia *Warszewiczia coccinea* — Showy scarlet bracts; flowers likely insect-pollinated; national flower of Trinidad and Tobago. Observed at Asa Wright.

MYRTLES (Family Myrtaceae)

Wild Guava *Psidium* spp. — Open, many-stamened flowers pollinated by bees and other insects; fruits dispersed by birds and mammals.

NUTMEGS (Family Myristicaceae)

Wild Nutmeg *Virola* spp. — Pointed out by Dave; an important fruiting tree in Trinidad’s forests. Produces fleshy fruits with a brightly colored aril that attract birds such as the Trinidad Piping-Guan (“Pawi”), which feed on the fruit and disperse the seeds. In this way, the guans act as key forest gardeners, effectively planting the next generation of trees as seeds pass through the digestive tract and are deposited elsewhere.

MANGROVES (Family Rhizophoraceae)

Red Mangrove *Rhizophora mangle* — Dominant coastal tree of brackish shorelines and estuaries, recognized by its arching prop roots that stabilize sediment, reduce erosion, and create complex habitat for fish, crabs, and other organisms. A classic mangrove specialist: excludes salt at the roots and produces buoyant, elongated propagules that begin germinating while still attached to the parent tree (vivipary), allowing them to disperse by water and establish quickly. A foundational species that helps build and maintain tropical coastlines. Observed at close range and discussed at Caroni.

MELASTOMES (Family Melastomataceae)

Miconia *Miconia* spp. — Small flowers pollinated by bees using buzz-pollination; fruits widely dispersed by birds; important food source for species such as manakins.

FIGS (Family Moraceae)

Fig *Ficus* spp. — Obligate mutualism with highly specialized fig wasps; each fig species pollinated by its own wasp lineage; both strangler figs and free-standing species observed.

NETTLES (Family Urticaceae)

Cecropia *Cecropia* spp. — Fast-growing pioneer tree of disturbed forest and edges; leaves dark green above and pale beneath, often flashing silvery in wind. Produces elongated, finger-like fruiting spikes packed with tiny fleshy fruits eaten by tanagers, manakins, bats, and monkeys—an important driver of seed dispersal and regeneration. Classic ant–plant mutualism: hollow stems house ants that defend the tree from herbivores and competing vegetation.

BRAZIL-NUTS (Family Lecythidaceae)

Cannonball Tree *Couroupita guianensis* — One of the most architecturally unusual trees of the Neotropics. Often planted in gardens and temple grounds, it produces large, fragrant, brush-like flowers directly from the trunk (cauliflory), followed by heavy, spherical fruits—the “cannonballs.” These are thick, woody seed pods that can reach the size of a small melon or larger; when they fall and break open, they release a pungent pulp filled with seeds, attracting mammals that aid in dispersal. The flowers are complex and likely pollinated by large bees. Observed at Hacienda Jacana.

CLUSEAS (Family Clusiaceae)

Autograph Tree / Pitch Apple / Scotch Attorney *Clusia rosea* — Waxy flowers produce resin rather than nectar; pollinated by specialized bees; thick leaves can be scratched to leave lasting marks; fruits split into star-shaped structures exposing bright arils attractive to birds.

ACANTHAS (Family Acanthaceae)

Cardinal’s Guard *Pachystachys coccinea* — Bright red tubular flowers adapted for hummingbird pollination.

BELLFLOWERS (Family Campanulaceae)

Centropogon *Centropogon* spp. — Tubular, often red flowers specialized for hummingbird pollination; part of a radiation closely tied to bird pollinators.

TRUMPET VINES (Family Bignoniaceae)

Poui (Trumpet Trees) *Handroanthus* spp. — Showy trumpet-shaped flowers typically pollinated by large bees attracted to abundant pollen and nectar; yellow poui blooming added striking color to the rainforest canopy.

CACTUS (Family Cactaceae)

Old Man’s Beard *Rhipsalis baccifera* — Epiphytic cactus with long, threadlike strands; small pale flowers likely insect-pollinated; fruits dispersed by birds.

Columnar Cactus *Pilosocereus* sp. — Observed on Little Tobago; upright, ribbed stems adapted to dry coastal conditions. Like other columnar cacti, stores water in succulent tissues and is typically pollinated by nocturnal visitors such as bats or moths, with fleshy fruits later dispersed by birds.