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Puerto Rico Species List Jan. 3-11, 2013

Guides Peg Abbott of Naturalist Journeys, with Hilda Morales and Sergio Colon Lopez of Birding Puerto Rico, and 11 participants: Ralph, Regina, Jean, Lynda, Susanne, Nancy, Mahlon, Helen, Jackie, Charlotte, and Ed.



BIRDS: (E = ENDEMIC)

White-cheeked Pintail – seeing a mother with ten chicks at Charca Yeguada was great fun, also saw them in good number at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Blue-winged Teal – Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Ring-necked Duck – two birds at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Northern Shoveler – Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Ruddy Duck – quite a few at the flamingo's lagoon, and more at Laguna Cartagena NWR. We had to study them here as there were many of the Andean race with little color and dark heads. In the scope you could see a facial spot. We checked all for presence of Masked Duck as well, but did not have time to walk out to the area that Sergio says they normally hang out.

Brown Booby – seen off the cliffs at Cabo Roja, one individual perched on the cliff and preening was a good view.

Brown Pelican – seen at all oceanfront locations, never in large number but still fairly common.

Magnificent Frigatebird – seen on several days from the very start above El Morro, high on the winds off the beach at our lodge at El Yunque, and several other locations.

Double-crested Cormorant – Jean and Nancy spotted this familiar bird to them one morning from the dock of our southern coast hotel, flying over small mangrove islands. Sergio was not able to confirm it, but we note the occurrence at La Parguera for others to confer.

Least Bittern – heard only at Laguna Cartagena NWR

Great Blue Heron – lone individuals seen at several locations including the Salt Flats. One came in each morning to the dock at La Parguera.

Great Egret – seen in all freshwater areas and most coastal areas. At one stop in the Eastern lowlands an individual walked up the road as if to come check out our bus. This was by a bridge and we suspected it might be from resident fisherman? Favorite sightings included a large group intent on feeding as we drove into Cabo Rojo.

Snowy Egret – several mixed in with Great Egrets in ponds of the Salt Flats area. Several had bright ceres indicating breeding condition.

Little Blue Heron – lone individuals on three days, including the rocky beach at Camuy and the small stream near the Fish Hatchery in the mountains.

Tricolored Heron – one individual seen in a small canal while visiting the Eastern lowlands.

Cattle Egret – seen daily, numerous.

Green Heron – one individual by the dock of our hotel our final days. Charlotte and Mahlon got close-up views walking out along the canal of Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Glossy Ibis – Laguna Cartagena NWR.

American Flamingo – one individual at Charga Yeguada.

Turkey Vulture – numerous the second half of our trip on the western side of the island.

Osprey – one seen near El Yunque, another feeding over the Salt Flats, another near Fajardo.

Red-tailed Hawk – seen daily, from coasts to mountain tops.

Broad-winged Hawk – one individual in the scope as we walked the old logging road at Rio Bravo, another fly-by at one of the state forest areas later in the week.

American Kestrel – urban areas near Fajardo, farm areas of the Eastern lowlands, a pair keeping us company as we watched sunset and waited for nightjars were all memorable.

Merlin – Great looks at this little dynamo. While we were watching a flowering tree for feeding hummingbirds, it flew overhead with prey in its talons. It then perched and stayed put for Peg to grab the scope and we all had good views – it was still perched as we left – a northern migrant now on “island time”.

Peregrine Falcon – Ralph caught site of one crossing the bay as we toured Old San Juan. We all enjoyed scope views of an individual perched on a pole near the pond known as Charca Yeguada.

Sora – many heard only at Cartagena NWR.

Purple Gallinule – numerous at Cartagena NWR.

Common Gallinule – numerous in freshwater wetlands, particularly so at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

American Coot – Charga Yeguada and Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Caribbean Coot – seen at two locations.

American Oystercatcher – – Laguna Cartagena NWR, nice to compare the two species.

Snowy Plover – two feeding together, a likely pair, at the Salt Flats.

Killdeer – one individual at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

American Oystercatcher - two at Camuy, picturesque in their snappy black and white plumage on moss-covered rocks.

Black-necked Stilt – flocks seen at Charga Yeguada and the Salt Flats, Laguna Cartagena NWR

Spotted Sandpiper – first seen in the small canal while birding the Eastern lowlands, the rocky beach at Camuy and at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Greater Yellowlegs - first seen in the small canal while birding the Eastern lowlands, at the ponds near Cabo Rojo and at Laguna Cartagena NWR.

Lesser Yellowlegs – seen by some of the group on our second to last day in small wetland area.

Ruddy Turnstone – seen from the dock at our hotel at La Parguera, and a single individual spotted by Jean while we had lunch at Galloway's at Boquerón.

Sanderling – group at Camuy at the rocky beach, huddled together as the surf crashed.

Stilt Sandpiper – impressive numbers seen roosting and feeding among mangroves of the salt flats area.

Sandwich Tern – Boquerón, a few individuals among the much more numerous Royal Terns.

Royal Tern – seen at the Salt Flats, at Boquerón, and in the distance over mangrove islands on the south coast. Groups of six to twenty.

(IN) Rock Pigeon – numerous in urban areas, hundreds in groups in Old San Juan.

Scaly-naped Pigeon – seen and heard in wild land settings from El Yunque National Forest onwards, but best seen in the little park where we enjoyed our ice cream at Mayagüez.

(IN) African Collared Dove – introduced, but very tame at our hotel on the south coast. Strange to hear “Botswana”, the words we put to its voice for so many days on safari there and in Kenya. Sergio separated the species out by call, pointing out the difference to us out by the dock at Parguera.

(IN) Eurasian Collared Dove – Hotel Yunque Mar and residential areas, especially in the eastern side of the island. Both collared dove species heard from the dock of our hotel on the south coast.

White-winged Dove – Seen on five days of the tour, most numerous in Eastern lowlands.

Zenaida Dove – seen in good number on the first three days of our tour.

Mourning Dove – spotted by Jean amongst other doves, around our hotel in La Parguera.

Common Ground Dove – seen in varied habitats, always in small number, on three days of the tour.

Ruddy Quail Dove – one individual at Carambalache Forest.

(IN) Monk Parakeet – numerous around Old San Juan. We also watched them nest-building in palms by the beach at Camuy.

(E) Puerto Rican Parrot – Hilda and Ed had very quick views of three going through the camping area while the rest of the group hiked up to a viewpoint with hopes to hear them! Rio Bravo State Forest.

Mangrove Cuckoo – seen on three days, often at close range. Best looks for the group were in the “magic” parking lot at the base of the trail to the lighthouse at Cabo Rojo.

(E) Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo – a favorite trip bird for several of the group, so exciting to spot them, hear them, watch them move through the forest. Often in pairs. Hilda’s vocal rendition will be with us always – Regina taped Hilda doing the call on video!

Smooth-billed Ani – fairly common, seen very day from Day Two onwards, often from the bus while traveling.

(E) Puerto Rican Screech Owl – We heard three individuals, caught glimpses of them moving between trees, and Peg and Jean had one buzz them right overhead. We wished for great views in the spotlight, but on the night we tried it was not to be... With our long days we thought we’d try another location, but we did not get back on task.

(E) Puerto Rican Nightjar – *heard only in dry forests near Guanica. Their guttural calls are memorable.*

Antillean Mango – first spotted on the early morning walk from Yunque Mar Hotel in a residential area. Seen on three days, heard on another.

(E) Green Mango – one individual spotted on our forest walk at Rio Bravo State Forest, good looks at it while it was feeding in the canopy.

Green-throated Carib – seen well and photographed on our trip to the Eastern lowlands.

(E) Puerto Rican Emerald – seen at the most varied locations for any hummingbird of the trip, both male and female. Seen on four days overall.

(E) Puerto Rican Tody – a trip favorite bird for many, especially as we had repeated good looks, and its endearing habit of flitting to perch allowed for close inspection. Helen got lucky and was just in the right spot to get some National Geographic shots of this little beauty!

Belted Kingfisher – seen off the dock of our hotel at La Parguera.

(E) Puerto Rican Woodpecker – first seen at Cambalache State Forest as we gathered to leave in the parking lot. Mahlon got some photos that day. There was a group of five sorting out nest holes at Rio Bravo State Forest, and we had good looks at another pair farther up the hill. Widespread, seen on three days, heard on three others.

Caribbean Elaenia – seen coming down the trail at Cabo Rojo, then seen again in dry forest of Guanica.

Lesser Antillean (Puerto Rican) Pewee – seen and heard on two days in two very different forests, Rio Bravo and Guanica. At Guanica they were low enough to see the lovely orange hue of this subspecies that may be split, adding another island endemic.

(E) Puerto Rican Flycatcher – we heard this species several times before getting a good view. Seen well on Day Five in the “magic” parking lot, where Mahlon, Helen, Nancy and others got some good shots.

Gray Kingbird – one of our most constant companions, its trill call alerting us when we quit paying attention. Seen on all days.

Loggerhead Kingbird – a handsome kingbird with distinct plumage contrast. Seen on four days of the tour, best close views were at the Visitor Center parking lot at El Yunque National Forest.

(E) Puerto Rican Vireo – this species was heard before being seen, but Jean got us on to one atop the trail we took in Rio Bravo forest. Quite a number of the group got looks at Maricao as we walked a trail away from the busy road.

Black-whiskered Vireo – *heard only at Cambalanche Forest.*

Cave Swallow – first seen on our day to the Eastern lowlands, then on several other days, the most common swallow encountered.

Barn Swallow – seen with Cave Swallows at two locations

Red-legged Thrush – seen in densely forested areas of El Yunque, Rio Bravo, and Maricao

Northern Mockingbird – seen on two days of the tour, one posed for us on our day in the Eastern lowlands near Fajardo and Ceiba.

Pearly-eyed Thrasher – seen on three and heard on additional days of the tour. One of the clearest sightings was on the railing of the display kiosk at the Visitor Center at El Yunque NF.

Northern Parula – one of the first warblers seen, on the trail of El Yunque, in with some PR Tanagers. Also seen at Guanica.

Yellow Warbler (Golden) – several individuals seen on the walk up to Cabo Rojo.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – one of the first birds seen at El Yunque, then again a few times later in the trip.

Adelaide's Warbler – heard at Cambalache State Forest, then seen in dry forest of La Parguera and Guanica, good looks at this little beauty were a thrill. Ed and Hilda had one VERY close in the Guanica parking area and she got a lovely photo.

Prairie Warbler – seen at close range in the “magic” parking lot below Cabo Rojo lighthouse, and then again spotted by Charlotte as we waited for the nightjars to call.

(E) Elfin Woods Warbler – a few of our group were in the right place at the right time to catch these little gems as they came in above us. In their lush forest realm, several of us got views of their bellies as they shot down the hill, never to emerge again, though they taunted us with calls that were interesting to hear. It was nice to be in their realm, and we worked hard to find them again with only sounds as our reward. Our invitation back!

Black-and-white Warbler – El Yunque Forest, one individual.

American Redstart – El Yunque, Guanica and others, seen on four days of our tour.

Ovenbird – a lovely adult seen at the banding station at Guanica, caught in the net and then freed, we note it for occurrence at this location.

Northern Waterthrush – difficult to see among dense mangroves, but we caught glimpses enough before heading into lunch at Galloways.

Louisiana Waterthrush – small stream near a bridge crossing – Fish Hatchery area near Maricao

Connecticut Warbler – secretive but making loud single note call, seeing this bird in its distinctive non-breeding plumage was a nice surprise while looking for Elfin Woods Warbler atop Maricao.

Bananaquit – everywhere, very common. Seen daily.

(E) Puerto Rican Spindalis – this was sort of our first “oh my!” bird, seen in the parking lot of El Yunque very well, a male and female, posing for us for quite some time. We saw this species on several days, in flocks, and more quickly, but that first encounter was superb.

(E) Puerto Rican Tanager – first seen at the picnic area of El Yunque National Forest, and then spotted in several other forest areas – Rio Bravo and Maricao especially.

Black-faced Grassquit – common in grassy and open habitats, seen on several days.

(E) Puerto Rican Bullfinch – this rascal species eluded us for days as a “heard only” nemesis, but we finally got absolutely super looks at Maricao. A pair was highly visible along the quiet road by the fish hatchery. After that we saw them again, and we were able to see a male being banded in Guanica Forest.

(E) Yellow-shouldered Blackbird – seen morning and night coming to roost at the mangroves just outside our hotel – very convenient considering how rare it is, an example of locally common, globally rare. We photographed them displaying. They were mixed on the roost with grackles and Shiny Cowbirds.

Greater Antillean Grackle – abundant, common, and bold. They often were with us while we ate at outdoor restaurants. One bold one even climbed up on the scope!

Shiny Cowbird – Eastern agricultural areas and southern coast.

(E) Puerto Rican Oriole – one juvenile seen well by just a few, in the tree tops of Rio Bravo. Its song alerted us to find it in thick bromeliads.

Venezuelan Troupial – we first spotted this dayglow orange wonder on a phone wire driving to Hatillo – the whole right side of the bus gasped. We then saw them daily, with very good views birding one morning on the dry hills above our hotel on the south coast.

Antillean Euphonia – seen on several days, but most memorable was the pair making a nest atop the road in Maricao.

(IN) House Sparrow – urban areas.

(IN) Nutmeg Mannakin – large flocks in Eastern lowlands with the wydahs.

(IN) Bronze Mannakin – seen well from Hotel Yunque Mar on an early morning walk.

(IN) Pin-tailed Wydah – agricultural areas of the Eastern lowlands, large flock. Winter plumage, no long tails!

(IN) Indian Silverbill – dry hills above the town in La Parguara.

MAMMALS

Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) – seen off the dock at La Parguera

Bat, species – several evenings we had bats flying about, but we did not identify the species

REPTILES – PENDING PHOTO REVIEW

Puerto Rican Coqui (*Eluetherodactylus coqui*) – the common coqui we saw in El Yunque on our night walk and heard everywhere. Note, there are numerous coqui species we likely heard as well!

Puerto Rican Ground Lizard (*Ameiva exsul*) – El Yunque and other places. Ralph spotted a particularly large individual of this very brown, and highly decorated lizard in the leaf litter of the viewpoint at xxx.

Puerto Rican Crested Anole (*Anolis cristatellus*) – widespread, the most common anole we encountered in Puerto Rico.

(E) Puerto Rican Giant Anole (*Anolis cuvieri*) - widespread in the forests, greenish coloration, can grow to large size. This is the one we photographed in Cambalache Forest. This bright green and very personable lizard was really fun to observe in the wild!

(E) Puerto Rican Blue-tailed Ameiva (*Ameiva wetmorei*) – small lizard with a prominent back stripe, Guanica dry forest

Anole, species – we observed several small anoles in varied habitats – pending review of our photos we may amend this list with specifics...

Common House Gecko (*Hemidactylus brooki haitianus*) – friends at our Yunque Mar Hotel

Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) – introduced and widespread

(E) Puerto Rican Slider (*Trachemys stejnegeri stejnegeri*) – scope views of their heads bobbing up and down in the freshwater pond shared with the American Flamingo

BUTTERFLIES

Malachite – several got to photograph this beauty on our day in Maricao with its distinctive emerald green and black pattern quite striking.

Other species, pending photo review – check back!

Photo: Puerto Rican Tody, an endemic, by Helen Gigliotti.