



## Cuba People to People Tour January 17 – 27, 2018

Gustavo Puig (Cuban tour guide), Dodie Logue (NJ) and Odey Martinez (Cayo Coco)  
with 6 participants:  
Patricia, Joanna, Doug, Iris, Ellen, and Joel

### Bird List

**Note:** Hurricane Irma made landfall in Cuba with winds of nearly a hundred and sixty miles per hour in the middle of September. It was the first Category 5 hurricane to hit the country since **1937**. Hurricane Irma killed at least 10 people during the 72 hours that it battered Cuba, damaging nearly every region of the island nation and leaving parts of Havana's picturesque historic district underwater. "Cuba is the mother of all the islands, geographically speaking, with a length of nearly eight hundred miles, but it is not exempted from the Atlantic tropical storms and hurricanes that sweep in at the end every end of summer, sometimes with devastating effects. After hitting the Leewards, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, Irma bashed her way along a two-hundred-mile swath of Cuba's northern coast that included Camagüey, Santa Clara, and Havana before moving toward the Keys and Florida, making landfall with winds of nearly a hundred and sixty miles per hour. Waves up to thirty-six feet high crashed onto Havana's Malecón. Ten people died, and as many as four thousand homes were destroyed. Damage to the island's electrical grid was severe, as well as to its agricultural sector. One senior official described the destruction to the island's banana, rice, and sugar crops as "incalculable." Several coastal tourist resorts, including the premier beach resort of Varadero, were also hit hard." - New Yorker

We experienced firsthand the damage to the Northern Cayos, and especially the bird life. There was not a Flamingo to be seen in the Northern areas, and other birds were scarcer than normal.

(Interesting article in the New Yorker, By Jon Lee Anderson, September 19, 2017)

**Blue-winged Teal** (*Anas discors*) – Seen in some of the ponds on the Cayos the first days.

**Northern Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*) – Seen in the pond by the sewage treatment place on Cayo Coco.

**Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*) – A few groups of these birds seen on the various Cayos and along the causeway.

**(I) Helmeted Guineafowl** (*Numida meleagris*) – Seen a few times along the road or out in a field while driving, didn't appear to belong to a farmstead.

**American Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) - Just two seen at the Mayajigua bathroom break, not really countable as they were most likely brought in. But a nod to all the poor Flamingo souls who perished in the hurricane...

**Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*) – First seen by Doug while driving out to Cayo Coco; more sightings of these kite-like birds on the Cayos, as well as driving along the shorefront, and in Havana on the waterfront.

**Neotropic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) - Seen a few days on smaller bodies of water in the interior.

**Double-crested Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Seen a few places out on the Cayos, prefers coastal areas.

**Anhinga** (*Anhinga anhinga*) - Distant looks at a bird with wings spread and drying on Cayo Guillermo, and also seen while driving near Playa Larga.

**Brown Pelican** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Seen on Cayo Coco, and a few other places including the Havana waterfront.

**Great Blue Heron** (*Ardea herodias*) – A few seen on the Cayos, including a white morph on Cayo Guillermo.

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*) – Seen on the Cayos and a few other marshy areas while driving.

**Snowy Egret** (*Egretta thula*) – First seen at the Mayajigua bathroom break roosting with Cattle Egret, a few more seen on the Cayos, and at the fish breeding ponds on our stop en-route to Havana.

**Little Blue Heron** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Seen on the Cayos and at the fish breeding ponds on our stop en-route to Havana.

**Tricolored Heron** (*Egretta tricolor*) – Not as common as the other herons and egrets, seen only on the Cayos

**Reddish Egret** (*Egretta rufescens*) – A few of the active birds on the Cayos, including some white morphs.

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – This non-native species was seen nearly everyday, including a rookery at the Mayajigua bathroom break, where there were many large chicks hanging out of nests.

**Green Heron** (*Butorides virescens*) - Seen several days, on the Cayos, and other wetland areas including the fish ponds en-route to Havana.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Several of these first seen on Cayo Guillermo, then a single roosting juvenile in a tree at the Coffee Museum grounds by Topes de Collantes.

**White Ibis** (*Eudocimus albus*) – A few briefly seen on Cayo Guillermo.

**Roseate Spoonbill** (*Ajaia ajaja*) – Just a few of these seen the first days, on the Cayos and along the Causeway as we were heading out.

**Turkey Vulture** (*Cathartes aura*) – Probably our most common bird, seen everyday.

**Snail Kite** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) - Quite a few of these raptors seen perched and hunting over the fish ponds on our way to Havana.

**(E) Cuban Black Hawk** (*Buteogallus gundlachii*) – A single perched bird as we were heading away from Cayo Pardon Grande.

**Purple Gallinule** (*Porphyryla martinica*) – Two distant birds seen at the pond across the road from the Crocodile breeding farm where we stopped for a restroom break as we were leaving Playa Larga.

**Common Gallinule** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – A few seen at the lake where we met our guide at Las Terrazas.

**American Coot** (*Fulica americana*) – A small group seen at the fish breeding ponds en-route to Havana.

**Limpkin** (*Aramus guarana*) - Seen twice; just a few of us saw a pair on the way back from Cayo Guillermo, then the group saw one on the road, spotted by Gustavo, just as we began our walking tour at the Coffee Museum.

**Black-necked Stilt** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Quite a few of these seen on the Cayos, as well as at the fish breeding ponds.

**Killdeer** (*Charadrius vociferous*) – Seen on the Cayos, and at the pig breeding farm at Las Terrazas

**Stilt Sandpiper** (*Calidris himantopus*) - One seen with a group of Lesser Yellowlegs - good for comparison - at the pond by the Sewage treatment place on Cayo Coco.

**Short-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Seen in swampy area while driving back from Cayo Pardon Grande.

**Spotted Sandpiper** (*Actitis macularia*) – A few of these tail-bobbers were spotted (sorry) along the edges of the fish breeding ponds on our way to Havana.

**Solitary Sandpiper** (*Tringa solitaria*) -A single birds was at the sewage treatment pond on Cayo Coco.

**Greater Yellowlegs** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A few seen on Cayo Coco mixed with other shorebirds.

**Willet** (*Catoptophorus semipalmatus*) – A few of these large shorebirds were seen at a couple of places on the Cayos.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*) – A few seen on Cayo Coco, good comparison of body and miss size with Greater.

**Laughing Gull** (*Larus atricilla*) – The most common Gull, seen the first few days on the Cayos, and the last few days near the Havana Harbor.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) - A few of these striking gulls were seen on our drive back from Cayo Pardon Grande.

**Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) - Seen through the scope in a marshy area along the road on our way back from Cayo Pardon Grande.

**Royal Tern** (*Sterna maxima*) – Seen through the scope in a marshy area along the road on our way back from Cayo Pardon Grande, as well as flying several other places on the Cayos, and at Playa Larga.

**Rock Pigeon** (*Columba livia*) – Seen many days as we passed through towns in our bus.

**(RE) Scaly-naped Pigeon** (*Columba squaosus*) – Had a few distant views at Topes de Collates; then we all finally had a wonderful look at one perched close to eye level at the Orchid Garden.

**(RE) White-crowned Pigeon** (*Columba leucocephala*) – A few of us saw some of these in big trees at Saroa; then we all had good looks at one perched near the end of our walk at the Orchard Garden.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Seen a few times - first spotted by Doug - in towns along the way. A more recent arrival to the island.

**Common Ground Dove** (*Columbina passerina*) – We saw these small birds on Cayo Coco at La Cueva del Jabali ( cave of the wild boars), as well as at the end of the trip at the Hotel Nacional in Havana, and a few other places.

**(E) Blue-headed Quail Dove** (*Starnoenas cyanocephala*) – Two of these lovely birds on the grounds at La Cueva De Los Pesces on our way to Playa Larga.

**(RE) Key West Quail Dove** (*Geotrygon chrysis*) – Decent looks at a single bird at the feeders at La Cueva del Jabali on Cayo Coco; they seem to be a species possible hit hard by recent Hurricane Irma.

**(RE) Zenaida Dove** (*Enaida aurita*) – Good looks at this beautiful bird on the ground at the feeders at La Cueva del Jabali

**Mourning Dove** (*Enaida macroura*) –These familiar birds seen a few days in small numbers.

**Smooth-billed Ani** (*Crotophaga ani*) – We never got great close looks at these funny birds, but we did end up seeing them on a few days, often from the vehicle as we were passing by.

**Mangrove Cuckoo** (*Coccyzus minor*) - A single bird gave us great looks along the road on Cayo Coco.

**(NE) Great Lizard Cuckoo** (*Saurothera merlini*) – We saw this magnificent bird a few times, first on the grounds of our very first hotel in Santa Clara, Hotel Los Caneyes.

**(E) Cuban (Bare-legged) Screech Owl (*Otus lawrencii*)** – Thanks to our guide Orlando, we got to see both a male and a female of this lovely little owl, most probable, the male flying away and the female peeking her head out of the palm stump before ducking back down.

**(E) Cuban Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium siju*)** – Frank helped us find and see this small diurnal owl on the morning walk at Playa Larga, again we ended up seeing a pair as we were looking at one when another flew in and they possibly mated before they both flew off.

**Stygian Owl (*Asio stygius*)** - Thanks to our local guide at Las Terrazas, Idalmys, who knew where this bird had been day roosting, we were all able to get good (though high up!) looks at this lovely dark-faced bird. Stygian means very dark.

**(RE) Antillean Palm-Swift (*Tachornis phoenicobia*)** – These small swifts were first heard chattering away under the palm thatched roofs at our first hotel, Hotel Los Caneyes. We finally saw a few that day, and on a few other days, delicately fluttering around like bats.

**(E) Bee Hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*)** – With Orlando's help, we were able to first see this diminutive - smallest in the world! - bird at some flowering bushes and being chased by Cuban Emeralds. The next morning Gustavo took us to some feeders by Korimakao, where we were able to spend more time with this little beauty, getting photos and enjoying.

**(NE) Cuban Emerald (*Chlorostilbon ricordii*)** – This lovely Hummingbird was seen nearly every day, often at a stake-out flowering bush.

**(E) Cuban Trogon (*Priotelus temnurus*)** – We got our first brief look at the Cuban National bird on our walk at the Coffee Museum with local guide Neysi, on a drizzly day. Later some of us went for a walk and we got better looks at one, picking berries off a tree. On our day at Las Terrazas, we encountered three, again after berries, at the French Coffee Plantation where we had lunch

**(E) Cuban Tody (*Todus multicolor*)** – First seen at La Cueva del Jabali on Cayo Coco where it really put on a show! This taking pictures got good chances here. It's Cuban name, Carta Cuba, or Cuban Flag, was apparent.

**Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*)** – Seen a few times, first on the Cayos and again at the fish ponds along the highway where we stopped.

**(NE) West Indian Woodpecker (*Melanerpes superciliaris*)** – Fairly common and seen at various locations, best looks may have been at the Orchid Garden by Saroa. Early morning at Saroa one could hear their calls, similar to our Red-bellied Woodpecker.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)** – Good looks at this bird a few times, including the morning walk at Playa Larga.

**(E) Cuban Green Woodpecker (*Xiphidiopicus percussus*)** – This lovely endemic was first seen on Cayo Coco, and was seen again on quite a few days.

**Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)** – Seen at the Coffee Museum.

**(E)(LO) Fernandina's Flicker (*Colaptes fernandinae*)** – A disappointing “heard only” for the group, seen only by the guides. Just before entering the town of Bermejas, Gustavo knew a spot to try. There was a very elusive pair, very high up in tall trees amid a flooded area.

**Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*)** – A few of these lovely birds seen the first days on the Cayos.

**American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)** – This bird was seen daily, so good to see a healthy population!

**(NE) Cuban Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala*)** – A few got fly-over looks at Topes de Collantes, but all got better looks-even in the scope- on our morning walk at Playa Larga, just as the light was dawning.

**(E) Cuban Parakeet (*Aratinga euops*)** – Orlando had a small group of these lovely birds roosting in a neighbor's yard in the small town of Bermejas.

**(NE) Cuban Pewee (*Contopus caribaesus*)** – A very present bird, seen most days and identified by its call and lopsided eye-ring.

**(NE) La Sagra's Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus sagrae*) – Seen a few days, more secretive than the Pewee, best looks at the Orchid Garden.

**(RE) Loggerhead Kingbird** (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus*) – A common and lovely bird, seen most days.

**(E) Cuban Vireo** (*Vireo gundlachii*) – We had wonderful looks at this vireo in Bermudas with Orlando spotting it.

**(NE) Cuban Crow** (*Corvus nasicus*) – Seen a few days, we first heard its comical call on the morning walk at Playa Larga.

**Tree Swallow** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) - A few seen flying as we made our way from Moron to Trinidad.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** (*Polioptila caerulea*) – Seen a few days, often found by its high whiny call.

**(E) Cuban Gnatcatcher** (*Polioptila lembeyi*) – Endemic and only on the Cayos, we had great looks at a close pair when leaving Cayo Pardon Grande by the side of the road.

**(E) Cuban Solitaire** (*Myadestes elisabeth*) – Heard and seen, at Cuevo de los Indios in Viñales. There were a pair, but quite hard to see amidst the tangle of trees and vines against the limestone wall.

**(RE) Red-legged Thrush** (*Turdus plumbeus*) – The lovely common bird was seen nearly every day.

**Gray Catbird** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Seen and heard many days.

**Northern Mockingbird** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Another bird seen almost every day.

**Ovenbird** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – This ground lover was seen a few times, first at La Cueva del Jabali on Cayo Coco.

**Worm-eating Warbler** (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – A lovely shy bird, seen only by a few off the back of the Coffee Museum deck.

**Louisiana Waterthrush** (*Parkesia motacilla*) – Seen briefly a few times.

**Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Seen only by a few at the back of the yard where we were looking at the Bee Hummingbird.

**Black-and-White Warbler** (*Mniotilt varia*) – Another migrant warbler seen on 6 days.

**Common Yellowthroat** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – We had a couple of brief glimpses of this bird, most notably at Las Terrazas when looking at the endemic Yellow-headed Warbler.

**American Redstart** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – This bird was seen often as well, both males and females.

**Cape May Warbler** (*Setophaga tigrina*) – Seen frequently, both striking males and harder to identify females.

**Northern Parula** (*Setophaga americana*) – Quite a common migrant, seen 6 days.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – A bird one never tires of seeing - seen on 6 days.

**Palm Warbler** (*Setophaga palmarum*) – One of the most common warblers seen, the tail bobbing is a great hint to identification.

**(NE) Olive-capped Warbler** (*Setophaga pityophila*) – This Regional Endemic resembles our Grace's Warbler in Habitat and looks; both in the Setophaga family. Seen in some tall pines near the organic lunch spot in Viñales.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** (*Setophaga coronata*) – So common in the states, only one spotted by Doug at the Buena Vista Coffee plantation where we had lunch at Las Terrazas.

**Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Setophaga dominica*) – This lovely warbler was frequently seen, it often was on Palms.

**Prairie Warbler** (*Setophaga discolor*) – Another migrant that was frequently seen.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** (*Setophaga virens*) – Seen only two days, first spotted by Ellen at Los Colorados Coffee Farm that we visited.

**(E) Yellow-headed Warbler** (*Teretistris fernandinae*) – In the same area where we saw the Olive-capped Warbler in Las Terrazas, but this endemic bird was in low brushy habitat.

**(E) Oriente Warbler** (*Teretistris fornsi*) – This endemic was seen on Cayo Coco, decent but brief looks. Found only on the Cayos.

**Red-legged Honeycreeper** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – Seen a few times, first at the Mirador (overlook) on the way to Los Helechos.

**(E) Cuban Grassquit** (*Tiaris canora*) - This gorgeous bird was only seen at the Pig Farm in Las Terrazas, we saw at least a dozen, bot sexes. Unfortunately it is being caught to sit in cages and sing.

**Yellow-faced Grassquit** (*Tiaris olivacea*) – Another lovely sprite, this one much more common and seen many days.

**(NE) Cuban Bullfinch** (*Melopyrrha nigra*) – A lovely bird, almost always seen in pairs; first seen on Cayo Coco, and seen a few days more.

**(RE) Western Spindalis** (*Spindalis zena*) – Seen a few times, again first at the Mirador (overlook) on the way to Los Helechos in Topes de Collantes.

**(E) Cuban (Zapata) Sparrow** (*Torreocornis inexpectata*) – Great looks were had of this endemic sparrow on Cayo Coco.

**Summer Tanager** (*Piranga rubra*) – Seen and heard only at the Orchid Garden.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) - A couple of males seen at the Buena Vista lunch spot on the day we were at Las Terrazas.

**Painted Bunting** (*Passerina ciris*) - A lone female seen under the feeder on Cayo Coco at La Cueva del Jabali.

**(NE) Tawny Shouldered Blackbird** (*Agelaius humeralis*) – Seen a few times, first identified by Ellen at the Museum of art in Topes de Collantes.

**(E) Cuban Blackbird** (*Dives atrovioacea*) – A common bird seen most days.

**(RE) Greater Antillean Grackle** (*Quiscalus niger*) – Another bird seen nearly every day.

**(E) Cuban Oriole** (*Icterus melanopsis*) – This lovely recently split endemic was first seen at the Mirador overlook on the way to Los Hellechos.

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*) – Seen regularly in small towns and cities.

**(E) Endemic, found only in Cuba**

**(NE) Near-endemic, found in Cuba and one or two other islands**

**(RE) Regional endemic, found in Caribbean**

**(LO) Leader only**

TOTAL January 2018 Tour = 115 bird species, Endemics = 19

## Herps

**Frog species**

**American Bullfrog** - *introduced*

**Turtle**

**Green/brown Anole species**

**Gecko**

**Cuban Curley-tailed Lizard** (*Leiocephalus carinatus*)

**Cuban Crocodile - *in captivity***