

Southern Belize: From Mountains to Mangroves -Species List-

March 10-18, 2018 | Compiled by Bob Meinke



SOUTHERN BELIZE: BIRDING & NATURE

March 10-18, 2018

TOUR SPECIES LIST

Guide Bob Meinke, with expert lodge naturalists Marvin and Steven, and 8 participants: Arthur, Dagni, Martin, Judith, Helen, Dorothy, Marica, and Shirley



SUMMARY

We had pleasant weather during our travels (it was seldom really hot), and despite the drizzle and mist at Hidden Valley (on one day in particular), we saw many birds during the trip, including a number of iconic and elusive species such as King Vulture, Orange-breasted Falcon, Barred Antshrike, Crane Hawk, Striped Cuckoo, Rufous-breasted Spinetail, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, and Ruddy Crake. Band-tailed Barbthroat, unexpected and a lifer for everyone and very local in Belize, was the prizewinner among the hummingbirds we experienced, with the Long-tailed Hermit lek along the Monkey River a close second. Among the visually more impressive birds we found were Keel-billed Toucan, Scarlet Macaw, Lineated Woodpecker, Collared Aracari, Olive-throated Parakeet, Masked Tityra, Montezuma Oropendola, three species of Trogon, and four species of Kingfisher. Manatees, Black Howler Monkeys, Morelet's Crocodile, numerous Iguanas, Agoutis, and an energetic pod of Dolphins (presumably Common Bottle-Nosed) rounded out our list.

The compilation below summarizes our sightings, covering species seen by all or at least some of the participants. An "**HO**" placed after a species name means the bird was *heard only and not sighted*, and "**LO**" covers those few species *only spotted by the trip leader or a lodge guide*. The ordering of families and species mirrors the checklist we used on the trip, and species-level taxonomy follows the latest updates appearing in the Clements Checklist (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Photo: Keel-billed Toucan, Narca Moore Craig.

BIRDS (200 species)

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese, and Swans (1)

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) A couple of pairs were seen flying along the Rio Grande at Big Falls

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Cracidae: *Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows (1)*

Plain Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*) Observed every day of the trip, a common and vocal species

Podicipedidae: *Grebes (1)*

Least Grebe (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) A breeding pair was located on the large pond at Hidden Valley—an infrequently seen species, and one of our better finds during the first half of the trip

Ciconiidae: *Storks (1)*

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) Seen in flight by some of the early arrivals at D’Nest Inn in Belize City

Fregatidae: *Frigatebirds (1)*

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) Unmistakable, seen by early arrivals cruising overhead at Belize City, and also during the Monkey River trip

Phalacrocoridae: *Cormorants (2)*

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) Scattered individuals and small groups were seen during the Monkey River trip and over Belize City early on

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) Mostly coastal in Belize, primarily seen by the group on the open coastal waters as we traveled to Monkey River in Toledo District

Anhingidae: *Anhingas (1)*

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) One bird was seen well sunning itself at D’Nest in Belize City; also noted along the Monkey River

Pelicanidae: *Pelicans (1)*

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) Same locations as Anhinga (above)

Ardeidae: *Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns (7)*

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) A widespread heron in Central America and southern Mexico, this striking species was seen in a roadside ditch, just west of Big Falls Village

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) Seen occasionally, on at least three days (often in flight)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) One of the world’s most widespread species, observed several times during the trip, especially in Toledo District

Snowy Egret (LO) (*Egretta thula*) Observed along the canal at D’Nest Inn; also along the Monkey River

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) Seen initially walking a stone wall across the canal from D’Nest Inn, then seen several times in southern Belize, especially in ditches along the Southern Highway

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) Seen sporadically throughout the trip, often locally common (especially in farm fields near Red Bank and Big Falls)

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) A beautiful species, in the mangroves at D’Nest Inn, also along the Rio Grande at The Lodge at Big Falls

Threskiornithidae: *Ibis and Spoonbills (2)*

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) Observations of this species were restricted to flyovers at D’Nest Inn in Belize City

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Roseate Spoonbill (LO) (*Platalea ajaja*) Same as above, with one beautiful adult at tree level over the canal

Cathartidae: New World Vultures (3)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) Most common raptor seen by the group during the trip, observed daily

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) A close second to Black Vulture, very widespread

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes burrovianus*) Most of us managed to get good looks at this species when a bird slowly flew around and over our vehicle, on the way back from Red Bank—the distinctive yellow head was clearly visible

Pandionidae: Osprey (1)

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) One (or possibly more) birds were seen perched along the shoreline and flying above the mangroves, as we cruised towards the Monkey River

Accipitridae: Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (11)

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) An unmistakable species, possibly a dozen or more of these raptors were repeatedly seen spiraling along the ridgelines at Hidden Valley; also seen during our trip south to Caracol

Black Hawk-eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) Steve Chaco picked out a soaring adult above Coleman's Café in Big Falls, the day we stopped there for lunch—a few of the group managed to get a look (although the bird was high, its dark plumage and unique paddle-shaped wings were distinctive)

Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) This migrant from South America was apparently just arriving at Mountain Pine Ridge when we were at Hidden Valley Inn—several likely breeding pairs were observed circling and interacting above the lodge and nearby open areas throughout our stay

Bicolored Hawk (*Accipiter bicolor*) Dorothy described an apparent Bicolored Hawk she observed during our day trip to Blue Creek—a seldom seen species!

Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) Great views of this elusive species were had by those who walked the shaded trail during our stop at the Howler Money sanctuary, when it flew in and perched cooperatively near a bamboo thicket—great spot Marcia!

Common Black Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) Preferring frogs and similar prey in lowland streams and rivers, this typically coastal species was seen at D'Nest Inn, and later along the Monkey River

Great Black Hawk (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) More commonly seen inland than the former species, a single Great Black Hawk was observed during our road trip to Big Falls

Roadside Hawk (*Rupornis magnirostris*) A small, common hawk (aptly named), we saw scattered birds balanced atop utility poles and wires most days of the trip

White Hawk (*Pseudastur albicollis*) White hawks are not particularly common, yet birding trips to Central America nearly always seem to pick up one or more birds (we actually saw the species on four separate days!)—even at a distance, the bright white plumage makes them easy to spot against the forest

Gray Hawk (*Buteo plagiatus*) An elegant species, seen most days of the trip perched roadsides or soaring through the canopy, especially in Toledo District

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) Soaring over the roadside marsh (see Ruddy Crake, below) we stopped at on our way back to Big Falls from Blue Creek

Rallidae: Rails, Crakes, and Gallinules (2)

Ruddy Crake (*Laterallus ruber*) West of Big Falls on the road to the Blue Creek turnoff (toward the Guatemalan border) is a swampy field known locally as the "Dump Rice Field," and we stopped to search for marsh species

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here one afternoon—those who wisely stayed with Steve Chaco got views of Ruddy Crake and Sora
Sora (*Porzana carolina*) See above—both species were calling, yet seeing them is never easy

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Snipes (2)

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) Two birds were working a dry field across the canal from D’Nest Inn
Killdeer (**HO**) (*Charadrius vociferus*) Flight calls heard in the evening at D’Nest Inn, before the main trip

Laridae: Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers (2)

Laughing Gull (**LO**) (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) A small group of birds flew in from the coast and briefly soared over D’Nest Inn, on our first day in Belize

Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) Several birds were seen well by the group as we navigated the shoreline before arriving at Monkey River

Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (13)

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) Not as common as in U.S. cities, a few birds seemed to be in residence in Belize City

Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) A widespread species, seen several times during the trip, perched in low trees near Hidden Valley Inn, Barton Creek Cave, and near Big Falls Village

Scaled Pigeon (*Patagioenas speciosa*) One of the few birds seen during our drizzly outing the morning of our last full day at Hidden Valley—a beautiful species, but not seen well due to the heavy mist

Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) Flyovers were seen during our lunch stop at Blue Hole National Park, on our way south to Big Falls

Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) The most common arboreal pigeon during our stay in Big Falls

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) A few birds were seen near D’Nest Inn—evidently not as common yet in Belize City as in the U.S. (but give them time)

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove (*Columbina minuta*) A tiny species, we saw a few mostly individual birds along roadsides on scattered days throughout the trip—never common

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) Unlike the preceding species, Ruddy Ground-Dove formed small flocks and was seen multiple times on most days of the trips

Blue Ground-Dove (*Clavis pretiosa*) Heard daily at The Lodge at Big Falls, just a few of us managed a quick glimpse of a pair flying by as we descended the serpentine back road down to Barton Creek Cave

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) A couple birds were seen on the ground at Hidden Valley Inn

Gray-chested Dove (*Leptotila cassini*) This is the large (compared to the Ground-Doves), (mostly) terrestrial dove that walked the woods in the Big Falls area—its low-pitched coo was heard throughout our stay at the lodge

Gray-headed Dove (*Leptotila plumbeiceps*) Generally paler than the preceding species, this was the common *Leptotila* species at Hidden Valley Inn

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) Only found in the SW and southern U.S., Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean and Central America (so how did it get that species name?), we saw these doves in Belize City

Cuculidae: Cuckoos and Anis (3)

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) A beautiful forest species, we saw a single bird as we walked the woods at Hidden Valley, the same day we visited the pond

Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) Though ranging far into South America, Striped Cuckoo is nowhere very common, and is heard far more often than seen—so our close-up, lengthy view of a male preening and displaying along a fencerow as we headed down to Blue Creek was a highlight of the trip!

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Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) A common species in Belize, particularly in the south, we saw several small flocks during our road trips to and from Big Falls

Strigidae: Owls (1)

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) A single, very cooperative bird sat in low, open trees around the lodge building at Hidden Valley, every single day—we all had prolonged views at our leisure

Caprimulgidae: Nightjars and Allies (1)

Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) Heard and briefly seen at dusk and dawn, largely during the latter half of the trip—the Pauraque's whooping call was a characteristic sound of our stay at Big Falls

Apodidae: Swifts (2)

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) Typically more montane in distribution than other swifts in Belize, a flock was observed on the Mountain Pine Ridge near Hidden Valley Inn

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) Heard (and seen) chattering overhead by early arriving guests at D'Nest Inn in Belize City—virtually identical to the Chimney Swift (but the latter is only a passage migrant in Belize, while many populations of Vaux's are resident)

Trochilidae: Hummingbirds (11)

Band-tailed Barbthroat (*Threnetes ruckeri*) Only known from the south in Belize, Band-tailed Barbthroat is unexpected enough that it wasn't included on our checklist!—several of the group saw the species with Steve Chaco during our hike along Blue Creek

Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis yaruqui*) Large and graceful, this species was also seen at Blue Creek—however, it was our encounter with an active lek along the Monkey River trail, where 8-10 males were buzzing and vocalizing, that was the most memorable

Stripe-throated Hermit (LO) (*Phaethornis striigularis*) Seen visiting flowers at Big Falls the final morning by Bob, as he departed early for the Punta Gorda Airport

Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) This distinctive species was seen during our pre-lunch walk at Blue Hole National Park, on the day we drove south to Big Falls from Hidden Valley

Canivet's Emerald (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*) A visitor to the flower garden at D'Nest Inn, seen by a few of us the morning before we departed for Hidden Valley

Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) This large species, related to the Sabrewings, perched cooperatively on some low branches as we walked the trail along Blue Creek

White-bellied Emerald (*Amazilia candida*) Common in the trailside vegetation at the Blue Hole National Park, this rather plain species was also seen in the riparian forests lining the Rio Grande at Big Falls

Azure-crowned Hummingbird (*Amazilia cyanocephala*) Closely related to the preceding hummer, the Azure-crowned was very common and seen daily at Hidden Valley Inn

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) The most common hummingbird during our time in the south, birds were seen routinely at the Big Falls feeders, as well as in a range of natural habitats

Buff-bellied Hummingbird (LO) (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) This species was seen by Bob at feeders during our initial restroom and refreshment break the first day, about half-way to Hidden Valley from Belize City

Cinnamon Hummingbird (*Amazilia rutila*) A richly colored species observed along the canal and in the flower gardens at D'Nest Inn, before the start of the main trip

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Trogonidae: Trogons (3)

Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) A colorful male was observed perched in the forest at Caracol

Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) Good views of this species were had during our early birding morning at the Nim Li Punit Maya Site, outside Big Falls

Gartered Trogon (*Trogon caligatus*) One of three taxa that have recently been split from what was formerly Violaceous Trogon, this species was unexpectedly seen in the mangroves at D'Nest Inn (**LO**), and then by the group that traveled to Caracol

Alcedinidae: Kingfishers (4)

Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquata*) A fly-over by a noisy individual was seen at D'Nest Inn, plus several birds were later seen along the Monkey River

Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*) This common North American species is present in Belize only as a non-breeding migrant during winter months—we saw one flyby in marshland as we drove to the Blue Creek area from Big Falls

Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) The largest of the Latin American green-plumaged kingfishers, a single bird was seen flying along Blue Creek the day of our hike, and another later along the Monkey River

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) Also seen briefly along Blue Creek, but surprisingly absent during our Monkey River cruise

Ramphastidae: Toucans (2)

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) Seen several times during the trip, including sightings at Caracol and the lodge grounds at Big Falls

Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) This distinctive species (the National Bird of Belize) was first seen (both perched and flying) on our way into Caracol—we also had impressive, close in views of eight birds that methodically flew one by one across the road where we'd stopped on our way out of Blue Creek

Picidae: Woodpeckers (6)

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) Well known in the U.S. and Mexico, we saw this gregarious species daily on feeders, poles, and open branches at Hidden Valley Inn

Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) A close relative of the Acorn Woodpecker, we saw this species at Caracol, as well as at Blue Hole National Park (during our stop on the drive down to Big Falls)

Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) Though never really abundant we saw this species almost daily, both in the Mountain Pine Ridge and southern Belize

Smokey-brown Woodpecker (*Picoides fumigatus*) A single bird was seen during our hot hike at the Cacao Farm (on the Scarlet Macaw day), foraging high in the trees

Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) A beautiful species, observed in the trees and briefly at the feeders at both Hidden Valley and The Lodge at Big Falls

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) Very nice views of this distinctive species were had at the Nim Li Punit Maya Site, near Big Falls

Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (4)

American Kestrel (LO) (*Falco sparverius*) Seen in Belize City on Bob's first day in town, before the main trip

Aplomado Falcon (LO) (*Falco peregrinus*) Bob and Steve Chaco were astonished as an Aplomado Falcon flew past them at the Punta Gorda Airport the last morning of the trip, as Steve dropped Bob off at 6:00 AM for his flight to

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Belize City—the last bird recorded for the trip!

Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*) A small (but lethal) bird hunter, we saw a Bat Falcon perched at Nim Li Punit during our morning walk there with Steve Chaco, and again later at the cacao farm outside Red Bank

Orange-breasted Falcon (*Falco deiroleucus*) A target species for the trip, we had nice, prolonged views of birds perched at both Thousand Foot Falls and King Vulture Overlook, on the Mountain Pine Ridge near Hidden Valley Inn—the rarest falcon in Central America

Psittacidae: Parrots (5)

Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) After a very early start from Big Falls, we arrived just after daybreak at Red Bank—we thought we might end up disappointed, but once we arrived at the cacao farm outside the village, we eventually got reasonable looks at several pairs of macaws as they cruised overhead—an impressive species, even at a distance

White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) This species was encountered as small, garrulous groups flying rapidly overhead, seen at least two times during the trip

Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) By far the most common psittacine of the trip, just about every time we encountered parrots they turned out to be Red-lored—often seen in the treetops, we had many nice views

White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*) Nowhere near as abundant as Red-lored, we saw this species two or three times as flocks rocketed overhead, at Hidden Valley and also near Big Falls

Olive-throated Parakeet (*Eupsittula nana*) While we mostly had quick looks at these slender parakeets during the trip, we had the chance to closely study a flock in a tree on our way to Hidden Valley the first day, near a small roadside gift shop and gallery

Thamnophilidae: Antbirds (2)

Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*) Heard much more often than seen, this large antbird was observed by Steve Chaco and a few of the group during our warm hike through the cacao farm, outside Red Bank

Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) A study in black-and-white, this common (yet typically elusive) species was uncharacteristically cooperative at Blue Hole National Park, perching for several minutes along the trail during our lunch stop

Furnariidae: Ovenbirds, Woodcreepers, and Allies (6)

Olivaceous Woodcreeper (LO) Seen briefly by Bob in a group of trees in a Belize City park, the day before the main trip started

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla anabatina*) Only seen once, during our walk along the trail in the Howler Monkey sanctuary along the Monkey River, in the vicinity of a small Army Ant column

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) Excellent views of this species (smallest of the woodcreepers) were had during our morning birding at the Nim Li Punit Maya Site, as well as on the Big Falls lodge grounds (in gallery forest along the Rio Grande)

Ivory-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*) Seen daily (but very infrequently) during our stay at Big Falls, our best looks were on tree trunks at Nim Li Punit

Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) Part of a mixed species group foraging in the trees at the Nim Li Punit Maya Site, where we had three woodcreepers in view at one time! (see Ivory- and Wedge-billed, above)

Rufous-breasted Spinetail (*Xenops minutus*) Returning from Red Bank, Steve Chaco paused along the roadside (not sure what we had actually stopped for), and serendipitously ended up calling this species out in the open as we sat in the van—a skulker that is usually very difficult to see well, most of us ended up with clear views

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (21)

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Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet (*Ornithion semiflavum*) Seen high in the canopy at Nim Li Punit, in a mixed flock with various species of wood warblers

Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) In brushy area alongside the road to Caracol

Northern Bentbill (HO) (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) An unremarkable small flycatcher (except for its odd bill) with a penchant for thickets and tangles—unseen by us, though its vocalization (akin to running your fingers along the tines of a plastic comb) was heard repeatedly at Big Falls

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) A single, brightly plumaged bird emerged from the same thicket as the Rufous-breasted Spinetail (see above)—most of us had good looks

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) A taxonomically complex group, *Tolmomyias* species are numerous and similar—we had a close look at a Yellow-olive at the Howler Monkey sanctuary during our stop along the Monkey River, near an ant swarm

Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) Seen twice on high, exposed perches at The Lodge at Big Falls

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) Also observed at Big Falls, as well as Nim Li Punit

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) Seen flycatching in open areas on the grounds at Caracol, as well as several areas around Big Falls

Bright-rumped Atilla (*Atilla spadiceus*) Dorothy, Marcia, and Bob accompanied Steve Chaco on a late afternoon walk near the river on the lodge grounds at Big Falls, and had great close-up views of an adult bird perched and singing

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) A familiar species in the SW U.S. and throughout much of the Neotropics, we saw and heard birds near Red Bank, as well as at Big Falls

Great-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) Unlike the related Dusky-capped and Brown-crested Flycatchers, Great-crested are overwintering migrants in Belize—we had our only look at this species in a forest gap at the Nim Li Punit Maya site

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) This resident species was more common than Great-crested during the trip—we saw birds at Nim Li Punit, and in Stan Creek District during our road trip to Red Bank

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) Easily recognized and one of the most common flycatchers of the trip, seen most days (especially in the south)

Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) Another boldly-colored, conspicuous species, similar to but less common than Great Kiskadee—seen perched on a snag at Nim Li Punit

Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) Another extremely common flycatcher at middle and lower elevations throughout Belize—readily seen most days during the trip

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) An early arrival was spotted by Steve Chaco during our morning visit to Nim Li Punit (the species is a breeder in Belize, but overwinters in South America)

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) The other most common flycatcher of the trip—seen almost daily at mid- to lower elevations in scrub and second growth

Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*) Nearly identical morphologically to Tropical Kingbird, the two species are more easily separated when vocalizing—we had unequivocal evidence of Couch's Kingbird at Big Falls, based on calls

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) Strictly a passage migrant in Belize, we had glimpses of this species on fences and wires as we drove to Blue Creek while at Big Falls

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (LO) (*Tyrannus forficatus*) Seen by Bob perched on fences surrounding the international airport at Belize City on his first day (others may have seen the species here, as well)

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (LO) (*Tyrannus savana*) A single bird (perched on a wall in a residential area) was seen by Bob, when he and Gaby (the proprietor of D'Nest Inn) took a drive to the market, prior to the start of the main trip

Pipridae: Manakins (2)

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White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) This elusive species was a lucky find along the trail at Blue Creek
Red-capped Manakin (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) One of the most distinctive species of manakin (in male plumage), a drab green female bird made a brief appearance along the Blue Creek trail during our hike

Tityridae: Becards and Tityras (2)

Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) A few individual birds were seen over several days, first on the grounds of Hidden Valley Inn, and later in the Big Falls area as well as the cacao plantation outside Red Bank

Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyrhamphus aglaiae*) Picked up by the group at the Nim Li Punit Mya site, sitting quietly on a low hanging branch

Vireonidae: Vireos (3)

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) Locally common along Blue Creek and Rio Grande at Big Falls

Lesser Greenlet (*Pachysylvia decurtata*) Seen at Caracol, Lesser Greenlets were common in the canopy of trees surrounding the monuments—the species was also found at Blue Hole National Park and the Red Bank cacao farm

Rufous-browed Peppershrike (HO) (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) Unseen by the group, but heard in the trees during our visit to Caracol

Corvidae: Crows and Jays (2)

Brown Jay (*Psilorhinus morio*) A loud, ubiquitous species, seen and heard repeatedly during the tour

Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*) We had a brief look at two birds flying over the road near Caracol, plus better looks at a small flock on the grounds of Hidden Valley Inn—a beautiful species

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (5)

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) Possibly seen on the drive out of Belize City, and then confirmed during our visit to Barton Creek Cave (the population at the cave is subspecies *ridgwayi*, which some authorities feel is a separate species endemic to the Yucatan Peninsula)

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) A small flock was seen feeding on the wing near the pond we visited on our first morning at Hidden Valley

Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) Seen daily in southern Belize, we had close-up looks at multiple birds along the trail at Blue Hole National Park, during our lunch stop on our drive to Hidden Valley

Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) Common along the canals in Belize City where we saw birds at the D'Nest Inn, the species was seen again while on the Monkey River

Barn Swallow (*Progne chalybea*) Several birds were flying above the agricultural fields near Big Falls

Troglodytidae: Wrens (3)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) Never occurring in great numbers, but seen off and on (best looks near the main lodge building at Big Falls)—the birds in Belize are native residents, and not migrants

Spot-breasted Wren (*Pheugopedius maculipectus*) As with many wrens, this species is readily heard but hard to see—we got glimpses at Blue Hole National Park, and then a better view during our morning at Nim Li Punit

White-breasted Wood-Wren (HO) (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) White-breasted Wood-Wren occurs in humid lowland forests throughout Belize—birds were heard singing most mornings at The Lodge at Big Falls, but never seen

Turdidae: Thrushes (3)

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) This familiar species, a non-breeding winter resident in Belize, was seen in the understory along Blue Creek, as well as on the lodge grounds at Big Falls

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Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) Another winter visitor, and more common than the preceding species, Wood Thrushes were seen methodically walking the forest floor in Big Falls and along the Monkey River

Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*) A common and easily observed species (Central America's answer to the American Robin), seen every day during the trip—the National Bird of Costa Rica, known for its elegant song

Mimidae: Mockingbirds and Thrashers (2)

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) Another of the common North American breeders that winter in Central America, we saw catbirds along the canal at D'Nest Inn, and then later in the lowlands of southern Belize

Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) Another widespread species in Belize, it was seen and heard most days

Parulidae: Wood-Warblers (16)

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) Seen strolling the understory and trails during our stay at Big Falls

Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) A terrestrial warbler species, birds were seen every day working the lawns surrounding the lodge at Big Falls

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) A beautiful non-breeding, winter visitor, seen briefly in the brush at Blue Hole National Park, during our lunch stop on the way to Big Falls

Black-and-White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) An overwintering migrant species, common and seen several times

Tennessee Warbler (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) A common migratory species in Belize, but only seen on this trip in a mixed flock at the Nim Li Punit Mya site near Big Falls

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (LO) (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) After a frustrating morning of fog and drizzle while birding at Hidden Valley, most of the group retreated indoors—Bob walked the fields near the inn and managed to pish up this species—a lifer!

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) This migrant was briefly seen and heard in the underbrush at the cacao plantation where we searched for the Scarlet Macaw

Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*) Another migrant, seen in the understory near Blue Creek and around The Lodge at Big Falls

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) Very common at the lower elevations, we saw this North American migrant many times during the trip, beginning at the D'Nest Inn

Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*) Less commonly seen than in past trips, we still picked up a few birds during our stay at Big Falls (most notably in mixed flocks at Nim Li Punit)

Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) Yet another of the migrant warblers common in Belize during the winter months—we saw birds in the mangroves lining the canal by the D'Nest Inn, and later on the lodge grounds at Big Falls

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) Seen in mixed flocks at Nim Li Punit as well as near the Big Falls lodge, males were in full breeding plumage ahead of their departure for their North American breeding grounds

Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*) Dorothy spotted a lone bird ("eastern" subspecies) on the sand flats at the mouth of the Monkey River, right after lunch—normally a caye-inhabiting winter resident in Belize that migrates north to breed in Canada, this was a very nice find for the mainland

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) Exceptionally abundant in North America, and much less so in Belize, we found a single adult during our day trip west towards Blue Creek

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*) Another winter migrant, we saw birds in the mangroves by the D'Nest Inn in Belize City, and later near Blue Creek and at Monkey River Village in the south

Grace's Warbler (*Setophaga graciae*) Inextricably tied to pine habitats on its breeding grounds in western North America, Grace's Warbler does its best to maintain this link during migration—we found the species in the Honduras Pine forests (*Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis*) around Hidden Valley Inn

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Thraupidae: Tanagers and Allies (14)

Gray-headed Tanager (*Eucometis penicillata*) A single bird in the forest at the Howler Monkey sanctuary on our last day, in the vicinity of an ant swarm

Crimson-collared Tanager (*Ramphocelus sanguinolentus*) A stunning species, seen on the grounds of the lodge at Big Falls, and during our walks at the cacao farm outside Red Bank

Passerini's Tanager (*Ramphocelus passerinii*) Closely related to the former species, Passerini's Tanager was also recorded at the cacao plantation near Red Bank (during the Scarlet Macaw trip)

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) Found on the grounds of the D'Nest Inn in Belize City—also seen later in Big Falls (at the feeders) and near Red Bank

Yellow-winged Tanager (*Thraupis abbas*) Seen by a few of us during our lunch stop at Blue Hole National Park on the drive to Big Falls

Golden-hooded Tanager (*Tangara larvata*) A very striking songbird, it ranges further north in Central America than any of the other members of the large genus *Tangara*—seen in trees on the front lawn at The Lodge at Big Falls

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) A common species in Latin America, we saw scattered birds most days while in southern Belize, and also near Barton Creek Cave

Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) Common at mid and lower elevations, generally in scrub and disturbed fields, etc.—the species was fairly common in fields across southern Belize during our stay

Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*) Habitat similar to the above species—infrequent, but seen every day while driving to and from Big Falls

White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*) This species was abundant every day during the trip—most common at lower elevations

Yellow-faced Grassquit (*Tiaris olivaceus*) Occasional during the trip—recorded along the edges of open fields around Hidden Valley Inn, and later along the Southern Highway on the way to Big Falls

Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) Seen primarily during the latter half of the trip, on the lodge grounds at Big Falls, near Blue Creek, and in trees along the road into the cacao farm near Red Bank (NOTE: We follow the Clements Checklist and eBird by keeping the saltators in the tanager family [Thraupidae]—some authors prefer Cardinalidae, others are simply uncertain)

Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) A single sighting on the back side of Hidden Valley Inn, while we were chasing Grace's Warblers

Grayish Saltator (HO) (*Saltator coerulescens*) Two birds were heard in the trees along the Rio Grande on the lodge property at Big Falls

Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (3)

Green-backed Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) A furtive species that we managed to see quite well, as it worked a dense thicket at the cacao plantation near Red Bank

Orange-billed Sparrow (*Arremon aurantirostris*) Related to the previous species, but with a well-marked black and white head and conspicuous orange beak—normally a forest skulker, two birds were seen by Dorothy, Marcia, and Bob when they joined Steve Chaco to bird a forested trail at Big Falls late one afternoon

Rusty Sparrow (*Aimophila rufescens*) Occurring sporadically on the Mountain Pine Ridge, we ran into several small flocks our first morning at Hidden Valley while watching Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed Kites

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) Well-known introduced species, seen sporadically throughout the trip in urban

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and other settled areas

Cardinalidae: Grosbeaks and Buntings (8)

Hepatic Tanager (*Piranga flava*) Seen most days at Hidden Valley Inn, active in the pines and at feeding stations

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) A somewhat confusingly plumaged, immature bird was spotted by Dorothy in the landscaping at the D'Nest Inn before the main trip—also seen the last day, on the lodge grounds at Big Falls

Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Chlorothraupis stolzmanni*) A single bird initially seen during our hike at Blue Creek, the species was later found to be locally common and very active on the lodge grounds (forest understory) at Big Falls

Black-faced Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanooides*) Seen by a few of the group, as they walked with Steve Chaco further down the trail during our birding day at Blue Creek

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) A single bird of this migrant species was discovered during our morning trip to the Nim Li Punit Maya site, near Big Falls

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) Infrequent, seen briefly at Hidden Valley Inn feeders, as well as in the brush at Blue Hole National Park (during our lunch break on the way to Big Falls)

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) Seen on several days—our most notable observation was of a large, mixed-age and mixed-gender flock working a grassy field, as we drove down to Barton Creek Cave from Hidden Valley

Black-headed Siskin (*Spinus notatus*) Several birds were seen feeding and balancing on grass culms in an open field, near the pond we hiked around our first morning at Hidden Valley

Icteridae: American Blackbirds and Orioles (11)

Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) The common blackbird of the trip—found in a variety of habitats

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) An even more pervasive species than the previous one—groups were seen and heard every day

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) Large flocks were seen two days on the farm fields in Big Falls, especially near the entrance to the lodge property

Giant Cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) The enormous cousin to the preceding species—we saw several of this known brood parasite hanging onto nests in a Montezuma Oropendola colony during our visit to Caracol

Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus prosthemelas*) Fairly common, individual birds and small groups were seen over several days near Hidden Valley as well as in southern Belize

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) A common North American non-breeding migrant in Belize, birds were primarily seen in the lowlands during our trip, near Belize City and near Big Falls and vicinity

Yellow-backed Oriole (*Icterus chrysater*) The common oriole at Hidden Valley Inn, seen daily on the feeders and in the garden areas

Yellow-tailed Oriole (LO) (*Icterus mesomelas*) Two rain-soaked birds seen at Hidden Valley Inn

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) A non-breeding migrant that frequents much of Belize in the winter—birds were seen at D'Nest Inn and later at Big Falls

Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) Brief views of this secretive species were had by a few of us as we left the cacao plantation near Red Bank

Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius Montezuma*) Most birds were seen sporadically as flyovers, on the Monkey River, at Nim Li Punit, and when stopped on the road down to Caracol—and we had very interesting views of an active nesting colony at Caracol (also see Giant Cowbird, above)

Fringillidae: Finches, Euphonia, and Allies (2)

White-vented Euphonia (*Euphonia minuta*) Reported as being seen on the grounds of The Lodge at Big Falls during

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our stay—in Belize, the species is generally thought to be restricted to the higher Maya Mountains to the west, so this was an interesting sighting

Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) Widespread in northern Central America and Mexico, one of the commonest *Euphonia* species—seen by us in mixed flocks at the Nim Li Punit Maya site

MAMMALS (9 Species)

Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) A group of several was observed from the boat during the Monkey River excursion—we got great looks! Also seen in the canal at the D’Nest Inn in Belize City

Common (or Atlantic) Bottle-nosed Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) Also seen from the water on the trip to Monkey River, a nice group of dolphins followed us and came close to the boat (probably Bottle-nosed...)

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) Spotted by some of the group on the grounds at Hidden Valley Inn

Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) Seen rummaging around every morning and evening on the lawns at The Lodge at Big Falls

Proboscis Bat (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) We had daylight looks at these odd bats, clinging in tight formation to the underside of tree limbs along the Monkey River

Greater Bulldog (Fishing) Bat (LO) (probably *Noctilio leporinus*) Seen on the wing above the Rio Grande at Big Falls, near the further cabañas on the lodge grounds

Mexican (or Guatemalan) Black Howler Monkey (*Alouatta pigra*) Heard and seen lounging in the canopy along the Monkey River

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) Seen in fields around Big Falls at dusk

Deppe’s Squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*) Seen frequently in the trees near the lodge and the surrounding forests at Big Falls

REPTILES and AMPHIBIANS (12 Species)

Yellow Cricket Treefrog (LO) (*Hyla microcephala*) On the side of lodge building at Big Falls

Morelet’s Crocodile (*Crocodylus moreletii*) A modest-sized specimen was seen sunning at the Macal River crossing, on our way down to Caracol

Black Spiny-tailed Iguana (LO) (*Ctenosaura similis*) Two seen, in dry, hotter areas in second growth scrub, at cacao plantation near Red Bank

Green Iguana (*Iguana iguana*) Very common in the riparian brush and overhanging vegetation along rivers and creeks—we got plenty of looks at the colorful adults sunning themselves in Belize City and near the Monkey River

Striped Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) Seen by Barton Creek, as well as in understory scrub vegetation near the cacao plantation outside Red Bank

Brown Anole (*Norops sagrei*) Occasionally encountered along the paths and on vegetation at Big Falls—sun loving

Neotropical Green Anole (*Anolis biporcatus*) In trees by the Rio Grande, within the lower lodging area at Big Falls

House (Asian) Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) Chasing insects by the outside lights and climbing the lodge screens at both Big Falls and Hidden Valley (*introduced species*)

Rosebelly Lizard (*Sceloporus variabilis*) Related to fence and spiny lizards in the U.S., seen warming themselves at Hidden Valley during sunbreaks

Lundell’s Spiny Lizard (*Sceloporus lundellii*) Another relative of U.S. spiny lizards, seen on wood debris piles outside lodge grounds at Big Falls in the afternoons

Meso-American Slider (*Trachemys venusta*) Large turtle observed during the Monkey River boat trip

Fer-De-Lance (*Bothrops asper*) Sizeable specimen seen on the highway several miles north of Big Falls