

# Ultimate Southern Belize | Species List

February 23 – March 6, 2022 | with Naturalist Journeys



**With participants Kim, Jeanne and Ed, Guide James P. Smith, and expert local guides Isaias Morataya (Black Rock Lodge), Marvin Rodriguez (Hidden Valley), and Steve Choco (The Lodge at Big Falls)**

**Compiled by James P. Smith**



*Photos by James P. Smith*

(HO)= Distinctive enough to be counted as heard only

(LO)= Leader/Guide only observation

(I)= Introduced

(YE) = Endemic to the Yucatan region

**Summary:** a wonderful four center tour at lodges chosen specifically for their general excellence and close proximity to a diverse range of avian-rich habitats as well as access to Mayan archeological sites. So much good fortune came our way in a steady stream of rare, endemic and spectacular species boosting our adventures in the field each and every day; Roseate Spoonbills, Scarlet Macaws, Orange-breasted Falcons, three species of hawk-eagle, Striped and Stygian Owls, Purple-crowned Fairies and Gray-collared Becards, all true highlights and yet so difficult to choose one over the other. Moreover, we were blessed with excellent weather and gifted local guides all of whom were instrumental in navigating us to well over 300 bird species for the tour.

**The itinerary at a glance: February 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 6<sup>th</sup>:**

**Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Arrivals | Belize City | Cheers Restaurant and the Western Highway | Black Rock Lodge

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup>** - Black Rock Lodge | Belize Botanic Gardens | Black Rock Lodge trails

**Feb 25<sup>th</sup>** – Black Rock Lodge | El Pilar – Bullet Tree Road | Spanish Lookout | Aguacate Lagoon

**Feb 26<sup>th</sup>** – Black Rock Lodge | Mountain Pine Ridge | Hidden Valley Reserve | 1000 foot falls | King Vulture Falls

**Feb 27<sup>th</sup>** – Hidden Valley | Douglas Da Silva Forest Camp | Caracol National Monument | Hidden Valley Reserve

**Feb 28<sup>th</sup>** – Hidden Valley | Green Hills Butterfly Ranch | Blue Hole National Park | Hopkins Wetlands and Resort

**Mar 1<sup>st</sup>** – Hopkins Bay Resort | Cockscomb Basin | Maya Center Village | Hopkins Wetlands | Sittee River Road

**Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Hopkins Bay Resort | Red Bank Village | Bladen Nature Reserve | Lodge at Big Falls

**Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Lodge at Big Falls | Dump wetlands | Piedra Lagoon | Dump wetlands

**Mar 4<sup>th</sup>** – Lodge at Big Falls | Num Li Punit Mayan Archeological site | Manfredi and Blue Creek | Missouri Road | Esperanza Road

**Mar 5<sup>th</sup>** – Lodge at Big Falls | Tunicha Ecological Reserve & Center | Punta Gorda | Ixacao Chocolate Farm | Lodge at Big Falls

**Mar 6<sup>th</sup>** – Lodge at Big Falls | Punta Gorda | Departures

**BIRDS (308 species recorded, eight of which were heard only and two were leader only observations).**

**TINAMOUS: Tinamidae (1)**

**Little Tinamou** *Crypturellus soui* — (HO) heard just the once, during late afternoon birding along the Esperanza Road, Big Falls with Steve and Ed.

**DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS: Anatidae (2)**

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis*— two at Spanish Lookout with Isaias, and another two over the Sittee River Road, Hopkins on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Spatula discors* – noted on three dates, 50 at Hopkins Wetlands being easily the most seen on the tour.

**GUANS AND CURASSOWS: Cracidae (3)**

**Plain Chachalaca** *Ortalis vetula*— daily fare throughout the tour with up to 20 seen or heard each day.

**Crested Guan** *Penelope purpurascens*—up to half-a-dozen of these arboreal giants showed well near the visitor center at Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Great Curassow** *Crax rubra* (HO) — Steve pointed out two calling along the entrance road to Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Despite being heard well, they couldn't be coaxed into view.

**GREBES: Podicipedidae (2)**

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus* – Isaias knew of nesting pair on a small cattle pond along Black Rock Road where they were duly enjoyed, and neatly photographed on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>. There was also a single was on Piedra Lagoon near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*— distant but acceptable scope views of two viewed on a small pond as we looked down across the southern plains from Num Li Punit Maya Archeological site on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae (12)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* (I) – up to six seen in a wide scatter of residential locales on three dates of the tour.

**Pale-vented Pigeon** *Patagioenas cayennensis*— curiously absent in the first half of the trip but small flocks noted almost daily from Hopkins Bay south to Punta Gorda.

**Red-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas flavirostris*— despite fairly widespread in Belize noted on only two dates of this tour; along the entrance roads to Black Rock Lodge and Belize Botanic Gardens on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, and at Bullet Tree Road the following day.

**Short-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas nigrirostris*— an unobtrusive pigeon of tall tropical forest, almost always heard rather than being seen. The distinctive four syllable song was heard on seven dates of the tour, most of them from Hopkins Bay southward.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocta* (I) – an Old World species set to become a regular feature of birding trips to Belize. Up to ten roadside individuals per day seen during our travels on at least five dates.

**Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina*— a couple of pairs flushed up from the roadside as we drove through the quiet, sleepy streets of Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup> and again on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Plain-breasted Ground-Dove** *Columbina minuta*—two seen rather well with other ground-doves at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and a pair seen later in the trip at the Dump near Big Falls.

**Ruddy Ground-Dove** *Columbina talpacoti*— fairly common throughout our travels found in villages, parking lots, field edges and so on.

**Blue Ground-Dove** *Claravis pretiosa* – heard on three dates after the first along Bullet Tree Road with Isaias, but seen well with Steve at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi*— scarce on this tour with a single at Bullet Tree Road with Isaias, and then seen on two consecutive days at Big Falls.

**Gray-chested Dove** *Leptotila cassinii* – only found in the south in the Big Falls area with singles or pairs on three consecutive days.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*— scarce in the first half of the trip with several seen on the El Pilar Road and at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> until March 1<sup>st</sup> after which we saw them daily, and in numbers, from Hopkins Bay south to Punta Gorda.

### **CUCKOOS AND ALLIES: Cuculidae (3)**

**Groove-billed Ani** *Crotophaga sulcirostris*— numerous social groups at Belize Botanic Gardens and especially at Spanish Lookout in the early days of the trip. Impossible to miss from Hopkins Bay southwards and seen in numbers along fences and field edges throughout the last days of the tour.

**Striped Cuckoo** *Tapera naevia* (HO) – the delightfully distinctive two syllable song of this smart cuckoo was at heard at the Dump and the Esperanza Road close to Big Falls on two consecutive evenings. Despite much scanning we just couldn't pick out either bird out for scope views.

**Squirrel Cuckoo** *Piaya cayana*— what an exceptional tour we had for this impressive species, seemingly widespread throughout our travels but especially common south of Hopkins Bay including good numbers along the access road to Cockscomb Basin.

### **NIGHTJARS: Caprimulgidae (1)**

**Common Pauraque** *Nyctidromus albicollis*— returning late through Hidden Valley Reserve after an outing to King Vulture Falls, we stumbled upon not one but five of these grand nightjars all beautifully illuminated in Marvin's headlights! Another could be seen at dusk over the lawns at the Lodge at Big Falls.



### **SWIFTS: Apodidae (3)**

**White-collared Swift** *Streptoprocne zonaris* – the largest of the Central American swifts found in numbers at King Vulture Falls, Mountain Pine Ridge, Green Hills Butterfly Ranch and up to 100 over Big Falls in the south. Noted on five days of the trip.

**Vaux's Swift** *Chaetura vauxi*— large concentrations of *chaetura* swifts over the cliffs at Black Rock Lodge, and over the forest at Cockscomb Basin and Big Falls were assumed to be this species and noted on six days of the tour.

**Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift** *Panyptila cayennensis*—these handsome swifts appeared over the Lodge at Big Falls on two consecutive evenings.

### **HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae (15)**

**White-necked Jacobin** *Florisuga mellivora*— very much a 'balcony bird' at Black Rock Lodge and seen every day there but views of this beauty reached another level at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch when we must have seen 20 – 30 males all contesting for space at the feeders, literally at arm's length and seemingly oblivious to our presence.

**Band-tailed Barbthroat** *Threnetes ruckeri* – uncommon in Belize essentially reaching the northern limit of its Central American range in Stan Creek and Toledo Districts. We came across a recently fledged juvenile by the river at Blue Creek and studied its features at length. Despite an extended vigil at the site, no adult barthroats came to visit during our stay in the area.

**Long-billed Hermit** *Phaethornis longirostris*— a large hummer with notably long white central tail feathers. Ultimately noted as one of the most widespread hummers of the whole tour with small numbers (1 – 3) seen on at least ten days of the trip.

**Stripe-throated Hermit** *Phaethornis striigularis*— ridiculously fast, usually allowing for 'naked eye' views only with one or two noted on four dates from Hopkins Bay south to Blue Creek including the gardens of the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Purple-crowned Fairy** *Heliophryx barroti*— one of the most dazzling hummers with close-up, prolonged views of foraging males at Blue Hole National Park on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, and Tunicha Ecological Reserve near Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup> – an absolute stunner!

**Green-breasted Mango** *Anthracothorax prevostii*— look no further than the gardens at Cheers Restaurant in Monkey Bay for this species, found at the very first lunch stop of the tour followed by other individuals at Black Rock and Green Hills Butterfly Ranch.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *Archilochus colubris*— a fairly common winter visitor in Belize, we encountered a few in the south at the Lodge at Big Falls and Num Li Punit.

**Canivet's Emerald** *Cyanthus canivetii* – fantastic views of a perched female along Black Rock Road on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Wedge-tailed Sabrewing** *Pampa curvipennis* – one pointed out by Isaias along the El Pilar-Bullet Tree Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Violet Sabrewing** *Campylopterus hemileucurus* – this large domineering species descended upon the feeders at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch where they out competed the hordes of jacobins for prime real estate. Seen on just the one date with about six individuals present on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Scaly-breasted Hummingbird** *Phaeochroa cuvierii* – nice views of a couple during the afternoon bird walk with Isaias at Black Rock on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> with others at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch, Blue Hole National Park, Red Bank and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Cinnamon Hummingbird** *Amazilia rutila* – one or two were present but not easy to see at Hopkins Bay Resort, the red flowers around the Rhum Shack being the big attraction. Better views came from the breakfast spot in Red Bank Village where about three put on a nice show in the gardens surrounding the buildings there.

**White-bellied Emerald** *Amazilia candida* – we began to encounter one or two individuals from Cockscomb Basin southwards with easily the best views from the balcony of the lodge at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Azure-crowned Hummingbird** *Amazilia cyanocephala*— this dazzling species graced the feeders and flowering plants around the dining area and pool at Hidden Valley Inn, often perching on the lines of fairy lights above the patio.....an absolute treat to behold!

**Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** *Amazilia tzacatl*— ubiquitous, well-named and found every day in a broad range of habitats, most often in and around gardens with flowering plants.

### **RAILS, COOTS AND ALLIES: Rallidae (7)**

**Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans* – super views of two, perhaps three, along the busy causeway at Hopkins wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and several heard in the same spot the following morning.

**Russet-naped Wood-Rail** *Aramides albiventris* – cracking views of a wandering individual at Belize Botanic Gardens as it strutted past the compost piles on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, and two more around the edge of a small woodland pond on at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Sora** *Porzana carolina* – heard at the vast wetlands of Spanish Lookout and Hopkins Bay, then heard and subsequently seen whilst watching Ruddy Crakes at the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata* – one at the Spanish Lookout wetlands on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and a couple seen from the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica* (LO) – a single adult flushed as we walked along one of the berms at Spanish Lookout wetlands on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruddy Crake** *Laterallus ruber*— the descending trill of this skulking crake was heard several times at Spanish Lookout but all that changed one afternoon at the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls when we heard and saw at least three or four individuals calling back and forth around a small puddle in the marshes. Ed achieved the impossible and managed to get some excellent shots of this normally aloof little crake. One of the highlights of the trip.

**Gray-breasted Crake** *Laterallus exilis* (HO) – Steve’s sharp ears and experience picked this one out during the crake session at the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls. Though it responded well to playback we didn’t have the same luck as we did with its nearby ruddy cousins!

#### **LIMPKIN: Aramididae (1)**

**Limpkin** *Aramus guarauna*— plentiful at Spanish Lookout wetlands with about six seen on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### **STILTS AND AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae (2)**

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* - numerous at both Spanish Lookout and Hopkins wetlands, especially the latter where it was one of the more abundant shorebirds present with up to sixty seen on three consecutive dates.

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana* - a pair in non-breeding plumage resting with the stilts at Hopkins wetlands on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Something of a rarity in Belize.

#### **PLOVERS: Charadriidae (1)**

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus* – a single on the first day by the lunch stop at Cheers Restaurant in Monkey Bay on the Western Highway. A Killdeer in a gravel parking lot might have been overlooked but thankfully this one was duly noted and proved to be the only one of the entire tour.

#### **JACANAS: Jacanidae (1)**

**Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa*— fairly common at Spanish Lookout with great views of adults and immatures in the wetlands and canals between the fields.

#### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae (7)**

**Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus* – we found a close single in non-breeding plumage with Greater Yellowlegs off the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, a bird that subsequently led to the discovery of 50 – 60 (!!) when all the shorebirds flushed. Similar numbers were present but more distant the following day.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* - five along the sandy beach front at Hopkins Bay Resort on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*— a wide scatter of mostly singles from the Macal River at Black Rock south to Blue Creek in Toledo District. Noted on four days of the trip.

**Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria* – at least four flying around and calling just off the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca* – small numbers, up to a dozen or so, present off the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on three consecutive days.

**Willet** *Tringa semipalmata* – one was resting and foraging with Sanderlings on the beach at Hopkins Bay Resort on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* – a single ‘winkled out’ from the other shorebirds at Hopkins wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, the only sighting for the whole tour.

#### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae (4)**

**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla* – singles noted at Hopkins Bay on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, and six or more resting with terns (and pelicans) at the Uno Wharf, Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus* – largest numbers (15+) seen at Hopkins flying along the beach or resting on the sea front. Also found resting with other terns (and pelicans) at the Uno Wharf, Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* – up to a dozen seen at Hopkins, either flying along the beach or resting on the sea front dock. Larger numbers at Punta Gorda with up to 45 at rest with other terns at the Uno Wharf on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>

**Forster’s Tern** *Sterna forsteri* – two individuals in non-breeding plumage resting with Sandwich Terns at the Uno Wharf at Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **STORKS: Ciconiidae (1)**

**Wood Stork** *Mycteria americana*— some incredible views of Wood Storks in large numbers (65+) right off the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on three consecutive days with other individuals noted during the tour at Cheers Restaurant, Spanish Lookout and Big Falls.

#### **FRIAGTEBIRDS: Fregatidae (1)**

**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregeta magnificens* – strictly coastal, cruising overhead on the sea breezes at Hopkins Bay and Punta Gorda. Well almost “strictly coastal”. As it happens we did have a high flying frigatebird soaring with raptors over the Swasey River near Red Bank far inland on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> – a bird that surprised Steve a little!

#### **ANHINGAS: Anhingidae (1)**

**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga*— seen on four dates, all at wetland sites including Spanish Lookout, Hopkins Bay and Piedra Lagoon.

#### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae (2)**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*— a few singles on the Macal River at Black Rock Lodge and perhaps half-a-dozen on the wetlands at Spanish Lookout but otherwise lone individuals at Piedra Lagoon and Blue Creek towards the end of the tour.

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* – three resting on rocks and wooden pilings along the sea front at Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **PELICANS: Pelecanidae (2)**

**American White Pelican** *Pelecan erythrorhynchos* – a noteworthy flock of about 14 resting on the Hopkins Wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> and Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecan occidentalis* – small numbers watched cruising the shoreline at Hopkins Bay Resort as well as several resting with herons and shorebirds at Hopkins Wetlands. We also had really nice views at Punta Gorda with about half-a-dozen at rest with the terns at the Uno Wharf etched against an azure Caribbean Sea.

#### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae (13)**

**Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis* (HO) – the gruff calls of this tiny, skulking heron could be heard at close range at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and Hopkins Wetlands on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Bare-throated Tiger-Heron** *Tigrisoma mexicanum*— we started the tour in excellent style with great views of this species in a small orchard along the access road to Black Rock Lodge well before we’d even checked into our rooms! Indeed the Black

Rock area continued to deliver sightings of this impressive species with several each day on the Macal River and it was almost 'prolific' at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> where we had at least six in just one afternoon – stunning!

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*— a winter visitor from North America, we noted them on at least six dates with up to 10 present at the Hopkins Wetlands.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*— present in numerous wetlands with the biggest concentrations at Hopkins where up to 40 were noted on three consecutive days.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*— plentiful at Spanish Lookout and especially common at the Hopkins Wetlands, otherwise scarce with two near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*— only plentiful at Spanish Lookout and the Hopkins Wetlands, otherwise scarce with just a single near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*— small numbers (8 – 10) at Hopkins Wetlands on three dates plus a lone individual on the seafront at Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens* – a scarce winter transient in Belize, we were lucky enough to see one off the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* – commonly encountered throughout the tour wherever we traveled near rough pasture containing livestock. One particular flock of about 120 frequented a small orchard along Black Rock Road where we saw them regularly taking shade in the heat of noon as we returned from outings with Isaias. Noted on each day of the journey.

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*— good numbers noted at most of the wetlands we visited including Spanish Lookout and Hopkins Bay but notably scarce in the Big Falls area towards the end of the tour.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*— one flushed up at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and an adult was found roosting by Piedra Lagoon near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea*— small numbers (2 – 5) at Hopkins and Sittee River Road on two days, plus a stunning, approachable adult on the dock (Uno Wharf) at Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Boat-billed Heron** *Cochlearius cochlearius*—a lone individual, and the only sighting for the whole tour, roosting close to a Black-crowned Night-Heron by Piedra Lagoon near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **IBIS AND SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae (2)**

**White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*— common and visible at Hopkins Wetlands peaking at 150 during the post-roost dispersal on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja* – only at Hopkins Wetlands. We spied spoonbills on three consecutive days peaking at c.45 at dawn on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, such a magical experience as we came across numbers of close feeding birds just off the causeway before they dispersed into the marshes for the rest of the day.

#### **NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae (4)**

**King Vulture** *Sarcophaga papa*— wonderful views of soaring adults, sub-adults and juveniles at 'King Vulture Falls' near Hidden Valley on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> and a similarly good showing over the Macal River at Black Rock Lodge two days prior. Further south we had soaring individuals drift into view with other raptors at Maya Center, Swasey River and Ixcacao Chocolate Farm on at least three dates. A super tour for good views of this charismatic species.

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*— abundant. Often seen soaring in impressive 'kettles' making it one of the most visible and common birds of the entire tour.

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—only slightly less common than Black Vulture and often joining the same kettles. Seen on every day single day of the tour though less abundant in pine country.

**Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture** *Cathartes burrovianus*—identified with care due to its close resemblance to Turkey Vulture. We found them in small numbers quartering grassland and savannah areas close to major wetlands at Spanish Lookout, Hopkins, Sittee River Road and the 'Dump' near Big Falls.

#### **OSPREY: Pandionidae (1)**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*— this cosmopolitan raptor was noted on four dates of the trip, mostly concentrated around the wetlands at Spanish Lookout.

### **HAWKS, KITES AND EAGLES: Accipitridae (17)**

**White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus*— we saw no less than three on the first day of the tour during the transfer from Belize City to Black Rock Lodge including two hunting by Maya Flats Airstrip. Further excellent views came from Spanish Lookout and the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls.

**Swallow-tailed Kite** *Elanoides forficatus* – this charismatic raptor graced the tour on at least five dates with up to eight seen at Mountain Pine Ridge, especially at Douglas Da Silva Forest Camp on the way to Caracol. There we had extended views of perched individuals with others calling and displaying nearby and it was just fabulous!

**Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus melanoleucus* – super views of a perched adult across the Macal River on our first afternoon bird walk at Black Rock Lodge. Rare throughout much of its Central American range.

**Black Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus tyrannus*— high flying displaying males were seen and heard by the Swasey River, Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> and at Manfredi on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>. The latter bird even soared low over the road giving excellent views of the neat barring across the flight feathers.

**Ornate Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus ornatus* – the fun with raptors got off to a great start on the very first morning at Black Rock with this species and an Orange-breasted Falcon (!!) soaring and visible from the lodge parking lot.

**Double-tooted Kite** *Harpagus bidentatus* – Black Rock Lodge proved to be the key spot for seeing this interesting ‘accipiter-like’ raptor with a juvenile seen from the restaurant balcony on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, and then at least two adults noted the following day. Further south we found one soaring over Blue Creek on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-collared Hawk** *Busarellus nigricollis*— super views of an adult soaring above the wetlands at Spanish Lookout rice fields on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Plumbeous Kite** *Ictinia plumbea* – one gliding over the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> was the first followed by singles or pairs on a further four dates. Nest building activity was noted at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch and Num Li Punit.

**Northern Harrier** *Circus hudsonius* – a single was quartering the fields at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. A scarce winter visitor and transient in Belize.

**Common Black Hawk** *Buteogallus anthracinus* – after super views of one at Caracol we enjoyed a steady series of singles and pairs in the latter half of the tour, especially along the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands where a couple of individuals could be reliably found resting on roadside utility poles.

**Solitary Eagle** *Buteogallus solitarius* – one of those freakish chance sightings as we approached the Hidden Valley Inn after spending most of the morning at 1000 foot falls. Isaias spotted a large, broad winged, short tailed raptor gliding east towards the Inn. Initial views were a little awkward as we tracked it from the vehicle hoping that it might rise on a thermal and start soaring. Sadly it didn’t and continued in a constant glide towards 1000 foot falls. The flight profile (broad winged and almost tail-less) vaguely resembled Black Vulture in shape which, combined with the overall blackish plumage, left no doubt in Isaias’s mind about the identification as he’s now logged over 10 ebird reports for Solitary Eagle in this area since 2016. Rare and local throughout its Central America range, it is a known breeding bird in the greater vicinity of Mountain Pine Ridge, one of the best places in Belize to find them.

**Roadside Hawk** *Rupornis magnirostris*— such a well-named raptor, we found this species alongside the road and other habitats on nine days of the trip with the most during the transfer from Hopkins Bay to Big Falls. Perhaps as many as ten were counted in the farmland and savannah that day, Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**White-tailed Hawk** *Geranoastur albicaudatus* – the first really notable bird of the tour. We’d barely settled in to Isaias’s minibus when a wonderfully close pair of White-tailed Hawks passed right next to the highway in Ladyville as we departed from Philip Goldson International Airport on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> – wow!

**White Hawk** *Pseudastur albicollis* – what a beauty, what a stunner! We only saw one White Hawk during the whole tour but it really was pure ‘snowy white’ and perched in a cecropia right over the road as we departed from Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus*— a fairly common *buteo* on the tour, noted on at least seven days with particularly memorable close-range individuals at the El Pilar Road (adult) and Big Falls (juvenile).



**Short-tailed Hawk** *Buteo brachyurus*— we saw three in one morning at Maya Center Village and the Cockscomb Basin access road on Mar 1st. These were followed by drama at Tunicha Ecological Reserve when we witnessed a close-range stooping attack from a light morph adult plucking a male Red-capped Manakin from its perch with an audible ‘smack’ just meters from where we stood – incredible!

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* – a familiar species in the US but decidedly uncommon in Belize. Marvin got particularly excited when we found a Red-tail teed up on a utility pole during the long drive back to Hidden Valley from Caracol on Feb 27th. Marvin mentioned that he’d probably seen less than five Red-tails in his entire guiding experience at Hidden Valley!

#### **OWLS: Strigidae (5)**

**Spectacled Owl** *Pulsatrix perspicillata* – Isaias did some super sleuthing and tracked down a juvenile that he’d heard calling at Black Rock Lodge, luckily for us it was roosting in a palm and we enjoyed fine scope views from behind the staff housing area.

**Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** *Galaucidium brasiliannum* – three males calling simultaneously at Douglas Da Silva Forest camp in Mountain Pine Ridge on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>. Our patience was rewarded with great views of a male giving his rapid territorial tooting calls from high in the pines.

**Black-and-white Owl** *Ciccaba nigrolineata* – a vocal male could be heard and seen on most evenings during our stay at the Lodge at Big Falls during March 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, often appearing in the trees right over the swimming pool at supper time!

**Stygian Owl** *Asio stygius* – a rare bird indeed with a very limited distribution in Central America and Belize. Thanks to Marvin’s local knowledge, this large dark owl showed well for us in the Caribbean pines at Hidden Valley Reserve on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Most certainly one of the highlights of the tour.

**Striped Owl** *Pseudoscops clamator* – another rare owl and another trip highlight. This one was expertly spotlighted by Steve Choco in his home village at Big Falls, Toledo District on March 4<sup>th</sup>. It gave the most remarkable views perched on a cable by the road, never moved and was still in the same spot as we drove away – wow!

#### **TROGONS: Trogonidae (3)**

**Slaty-tailed Trogon** *Trogon massena*— Isaias spotted the first along the entrance road to Black Rock Lodge on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> but rather scarce thereafter being noted on just three more days of the tour though we did have incredible views at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-headed Trogon** *Trogon melanocephalus*— rather widespread in the humid, broadleaf forests centered around the Lodge at Big Falls after the first was seen near Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Gartered Trogon** *Trogon caligatus*— the smallest of the trogons and the most widespread being seen or heard on seven days of the tour. The views of this species at the Belize Botanic Gardens were simply ‘off-the-charts’ with an incredibly photogenic pair hanging around the entrance and visitor center seemingly oblivious to the commotion going on below them!

#### **MOTMOTS: Motmotidae (2)**

**Tody Motmot** *Hylomanes momotula* – Isaias knew of a sweet spot by Aguacate Lagoon near Spanish Lookout. After a short walk, a pair of these tiny motmots ‘popped’ into view for us to enjoy great views for as long as the nibbling mosquitoes would allow.

**Lesson’s Motmot** *Momotus lessonii* – super views of a roadside individual picked out by Isaias at Noh Beh Tanah near San Antonio on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. Another was heard at Cockscomb Basin Mar 1st, and one was seen very well at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on the penultimate day of the tour.

#### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae (4)**

**Ringed Kingfisher** *Megaceryle torquata*— we had the great fortune to find singles or pairs at Spanish Lookout, Hopkins Wetlands and Blue Creek.

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*— a fairly common winter visitor and transient to Belize, we came across half-a-dozen at Spanish Lookout, plus others at Hopkins Wetlands and Punta Gorda on four dates.

**Amazon Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle amazona* – one showed briefly at Blue Creek as Steve worked hard to find us a pygmy kingfisher!

**Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana*— this feisty little kingfisher put on a nice show by the organic gardens at Black Rock during the afternoon bird walk with Isaías on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>. Others were subsequently found on five dates at widespread locations including by the Rio Grande at the Lodge at Big Falls.

#### **PUFFBIRDS: Bucconidae (2)**

**White-necked Puffbird** *Notharchus hyperrhynchus*— the largest of the puffbirds in the Central American region was seen twice on the tour, both times allowing for extended scope views; on the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and the Swasey River, near Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**White-whiskered Puffbird** *Malacoptila panamensis*— sensational views of a highly cooperative roadside pair at the gate to Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>, plus equally good views at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, and by the Swasey River near Red Bank on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **JACAMARS: Galbulidae (1)**

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar** *Galbula ruficauda*— another denizen of humid broadleaf forest. Heard-only on five dates, and that might have been the extent of our experience had it not been for a friendly, visible individual near the swimming hole at Blue Hole National Park on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **TOUCANS: Ramphastidae (2)**

**Collared Aracari** *Pteroglossus torquatus*— we had multiple memorable encounters with this attractive species enjoying small flocks at Black Rock Lodge, Caracol, Num Li Punit and Tunicha Ecological Reserve.

**Keel-billed Toucan** *Ramphastos sulfuratus*—the National Bird of Belize almost eluded us, at least in terms of the views we most desired. All that changed during the early morning visit to Num Li Punit when singles, twos and threes filtered through the tops of the cercropias against a crisp blue Caribbean sky giving sensational views.

#### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae (7)**

**Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus*— restricted to Mountain Pine Ridge on two days of the tour where communal groups of up to 15 were noted in Hidden Valley Reserve and Douglas Da Silva forest camp on the way to Caracol.

**Black-cheeked Woodpecker** *Melanerpes pucherani*— prolonged views of a single teed up nicely on a leafless stump at Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, and one poking around the visitor center gardens at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *Melanerpes aurifrons*— widespread, bold and vocal, we found this to be the most common woodpecker with sightings on each day of the tour in a wide variety of locations. Equally at home in the forest or ‘poaching’ freshly sliced fruits at the lodge feeders.

**Smoky-brown Woodpecker** *Dryobates fumigatus*— singles of this well-named, unobtrusive woodpecker were found at Cockscomb Basin and the Lodge at Big Falls. Both gave great views and both were close to mixed feeding flocks.

**Pale-billed Woodpecker** *Campephilus guatemalensis*— the largest of the woodpeckers found on this tour, the distinctive ‘double-wrap’ being heard in multiple forest locations in the first half of the trip with good views at Mountain Pine Ridge, Hidden Valley and Caracol. Scarce in the south and heard on just one date in the second half of the tour.

**Lineated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus lineatus*— smaller than Pale-billed Woodpecker and decidedly uncommon on this particular trip with singles at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden-olive Woodpecker** *Colaptes rubiginosus*—often aloof and difficult to see, we did well to secure good views early in the trip on the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. Otherwise limited to two ‘heard-only’ observations in Mountain Pine Ridge.

#### **FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae (6)**

**Laughing Falcon** *Herpetotheres cachinnans*— remarkable views of one teed up on denuded cecropia way out in the open at Bullet Tree on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and another heard at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*— concentrations of up to half-a-dozen could be found at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and along the Southern Highway south of Hopkins Village on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Aplomado Falcon** *Falco femoralis* – pairs of this long winged, long tailed beauty were seen from Sittee River Road (Hopkins) on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and crossing the savannah via Red Bank Road on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Bat Falcon** *Falco ruficularis*— this dynamic little falcon was seen well at Belize Botanic Gardens on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, and Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Especially memorable was a pair seen from atop Caana (Sky Palace) the tallest of the manmade structures at Caracol where we enjoyed Bat Falcons zipping past at eye-level!

**Orange-breasted Falcon** *Falco deiroleucus* – very rare in Central America but with a stronghold in Belize, a falcon fittingly inhabiting the dramatic steep-sided cliffs and gorges of Belize. The tour got off to flying start on the first full morning with distant but acceptable views of a single soaring from the parking lot at Black Rock Lodge. Two days later we had great scope views plus a couple of close fly-bys of adults against the spectacular backdrop of 1000 foot falls.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* – a single at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, a fairly uncommon transient in Belize.

#### **PARROTS: Psittacidae (6)**

**White-crowned Parrot** *Pionus senilis*— super views of a party of about eight in a cecropia on the first full morning with Isaias at Black Rock on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, and that was the only sighting during the tour although we did hear a noisy flock at Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-lore Parrot** *Amazona autumnalis*—the raucous screeching of this large, broad-winged *Amazona* was a constant on most days on the tour. Flocks were seen and heard in a wide variety of locations on almost every day of the trip.

**White-fronted Parrot** *Amazona albifrons*— small flocks noted during the first half of the trip with sightings coming from Black Rock Lodge, Mountain Pine Ridge and especially Hopkins Bay where we had the best of our scope views.

**Mealy Parrot** *Amazona farinosa*— the largest *Amazona* found in the region, seen on only one date but with good looks (and audio) of about eight individuals at the gate to Mountain Pine Ridge forest reserve.

**Olive-throated (Aztec) Parakeet** *Eupsittula nana* – noisy, fast-moving flocks (5 – 30) were seen in flight on five days of the trip though we did secure good views of feeding birds along the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Scarlet Macaw** *Ara macao* – over twenty of these magnificent beauties seen flying, squawking and screeching above the forested hillsides behind Red Bank Village on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>. Steve insisted that we hike half-a-mile upslope to an overlook above the village and how right he was. There we had numerous views of flocks passing by at eye level and below us, without doubt one of the highlights of the tour.

#### **ANTBIRDS: Thamnophilidae (6)**

**Great Antshrike** *Taraba major* – one of those tricky *antbirds* more often heard than seen. Yet our group was rewarded with super views of this striking red-eyed species during an early morning visit to Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>, with another heard at Big Falls the following day.

**Barred Antshrike** *Thamnophilus doliatus*— a fabulous antbird often emitting distinctive vocals and sporting a distinctive appearance. One was seen well on Black Rock Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, but the species was only really common south of Cockscomb Basin where we heard and saw them on six straight days through to the end of the tour.

**Black-crowned Antshrike** *Thamnophilus atrinucha* – Steve coaxed in a pair for excellent views at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>. One of several Central American species reaching the northern limit of its range in southern Belize.

**Dot-winged Antwren** *Microrhopias quixensis* – pairs of this smart little antwren were noted on three consecutive days in the middle of the tour; at Blue Hole National Park, Cockscomb Basin and near Red Bank Village.

**Dusky Antbird** *Cercomacroides tyrannina*— our patience was rewarded with good views at Cockscomb Basin, the Lodge at Big Falls and Tunicha.

**Bare-crowned Antbird** *Gymnocichla nudiceps* – a real rarity, not only locally but a species reaching the northern limit of its Central American range in southern Belize. As such, it was appropriately difficult to find and Steve tried hard to rustle up sightings for us in the Big Falls area. Aside from a few tantalizing call notes we came up empty until the final afternoon when the grounds of the Lodge finally produced some views of a fast moving male, and a slightly more settled bright rufous female.

### **ANTTHRUSHES: Formicariidae (1)**

**Mayan Antthrush** *Formicarius moniliger* —singing birds playing hide-and-seek could be heard regularly along the wooded entrance to the Lodge at Big Falls but we ultimately had really excellent views of this ground-dwelling antbird strutting across the forest floor at Num Li Punit – wow!

### **OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS: Furnariidae (7)**

**Olivaceous Woodcreeper** *Sittasomus griseicapillus*— a small, inconspicuous woodcreeper seen just the once, on our afternoon bird walk with Isaias at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> although we did hear another calling at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Tawny-winged Woodcreeper** *Dendrocinia anabatina* – seen on two consecutive days at Big Falls, along the entrance road to the Lodge.

**Wedge-billed Woodcreeper** *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* – we didn't see many but the two individuals we did see gave excellent views as they worked trees, vines and tangles at the Lodge at Big Falls and Num Li Punit parking lot.

**Ivory-billed Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*— fairly widespread and easily the most common woodcreeper species found with pairs or singles from Black Rock Lodge through to Big Falls on six dates.

**Plain Xenops** *Xenops minus* – nice if somewhat shaded views of a foraging bird working furled leaves above a stream at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner** *Automalus ochrolaemus* (HO) – heard well but alas not seen at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Rufous-breasted Spinetail** *Synallaxis erythrorhox* – with a reputation for being reclusive the chances of us seeing this long-tailed skulker seemed minimal but, remarkably, we had excellent looks of a pair working through the thickets at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **MANAKINS: Pipridae (2)**

**White-collared Manakin** *Manacus candei*— a beautiful species, we saw numerous males at sites such as Cockscomb Basin and Red Bank Village – much more widespread and numerous than the Red-capped.

**Red-capped Manakin** *Ceratopipra mentalis*— a pair at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>, the female of which showed quite well and clearly fared better than the male which was plucked from its perch in a fruiting White Maya Tree by a Short-tailed Hawk – nature in the raw!

### **BECARDS AND TITYRAS: Tityridae (6)**

**Black-crowned Tityra** *Tityra inquisitor* – super views of a pair around the entrance to Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>, followed by more individuals at Tunicha and Blue Creek on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Masked Tityra** *Tityra semifasciata*— widespread and seen on six dates of the tour though much frequently in the second half of the trip from Hopkins Bay southward. Often in small groups and often around mixed feeding flocks of other species.

**Northern Schiffornis** *Schiffornis veraepacis*— the distinctive whistled song of this species was heard on no less than six days of the tour with individuals seen remarkably well at Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, and Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>. Not an easy species to see but on this tour we triumphed!

**White-winged Becard** *Pachyramphus polychopterus* – great views of a pair in riverside thickets at Cockscomb Basin Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and subsequently heard, but not seen, at Big Falls and Tunicha later in the tour.

**Gray-collared Becard** *Pachyramphus major* – fortune definitely came our way at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup> when we came across a pair of this rare becard feeding near the lodge building. Though essentially a highlands breeder, they apparently wander to lower elevations outside of the breeding season - both male and female were seen well.

**Rose-throated Becard** *Pachyramphus aglaiae*— a good showing of this species throughout the tour though only in small numbers. Noted on at least five days.

### **SHARPBILL AND ALLIES: Oxyruncidae (2)**

**Royal Flycatcher** *Onychorhynchus coronatus* – sensational, prolonged views of a single in the orchard groves by Swasey River near Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.



**Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher** *Myiobius sulphureipygius* – Marvin spotted one foraging above the trail on our final bird walk with him at Blue Hole National Park on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. Earlier in the tour Isaias pointed out a skulking individual on the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae (31)**

**Stub-tailed Spadebill** *Platyrinchus cancrominus*—one of the more difficult flycatchers, a species very much at home within dark, humid, broadleaf forests. The call is distinctive and was heard well at the El Pilar Road and Cockscomb Basin but we finally clinched acceptable views on the morning bird walk with Steve at Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Ochre-bellied Flycatcher** *Mionectes oleagineus*— decent views of two individuals; one at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and one at Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Sepia-capped Flycatcher** *Leptopogon amaurocephalus* – remarkable views of a pair nest building in a moss-strewn cliff face directly above the swimming hole at Blue Hole National Park on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. Uncommon throughout much of its Central American range.

**Northern Bentbill** *Oncostoma cinereigulare* – we had some luck with this interesting flycatcher by the Swasey River near Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> with another heard at Big Falls on the following day.

**Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher** *Poecilatriccus sylvia* – one called persistently at close range along Black Rock Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and another heard calling at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> but it wasn't until late afternoon on the penultimate day that we finally clinched views in the dense thickets by the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Common Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum cinereum*— quite scarce, perhaps surprisingly so, heard-only on two dates though we did see one well at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Eye-ringed Flatbill** *Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*— a true denizen of humid broadleaf forest, we had great views at this eye-ringed beauty at Caracol and Blue Hole National Park.

**Yellow-olive Flycatcher** *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*— a nice even spread of singles found on four days of the tour from Black Rock Lodge to the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet** *Ornithion semiflavum* (HO) – one heard calling near the entrance to Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Mistletoe Tyrannulet** *Zimmerius parvus* – a single came in to Steve's owl impersonations and gave excellent views at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenish Elaenia** *Myiopagis viridicata*— seen well with Steve at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> with other singles at Red Bank and Tunicha.

**Yellow-bellied Elaenia** *Elaenia flavogaster*— a fairly large, long tailed *elaenia* most easily detected by its 'wheezy' calls. Found at Black Rock Lodge, Cockscomb Basin, Red Bank Village, Swasey River and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Tropical Pewee** *Contopus cinereus* – super views of this resident pewee at Black Rock Lodge and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** *Empidonax flaviventris*— a fairly common wintering *empidonax* most frequently detected by call notes but certainly seen well at some locations such as Black Rock, Cockscomb Basin and Big Falls.

**Willow Flycatcher** *Empidonax traillii* – a single individual was heard calling and then seen at 'The Dump' near Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>, apparently a known wintering spot for them.

**White-throated Flycatcher** *Empidonax albigularis* – Isaias worked hard to show us this tricky *empidonax* in the wetlands at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. Eventually we were rewarded with excellent views of one calling perched low down in the reeds and sedges. A scarce resident species with a rather fragmented distribution in Central America.

**Least Flycatcher** *Empidonax minimus* – a single heard, seen and photographed at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans* – up to three along the Macal River at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*— there was really no better way to start the journey than views of a male Vermilion Flycatcher perched in orchard trees by the parking lot at Cheers Restaurant on the first day! Then we came across other males at Spanish Lookout and Red Bank Village.

**Bright-rumped Attila** *Attila spadiceus* – after hearing singles at Black Rock and at Cockscomb Basin we were treated to excellent views on two consecutive days at the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Yucatan Flycatcher** *Myiarchus yucatanensis* (YE) – Isaias knew of a couple of pairs on the El Pilar Road. While the first pair didn't appear to be 'at home', we had great success at the second site with prolonged views of this tricky *Myiarchus*, a

species closely resembling the much more widespread Dusky-capped Flycatcher (also present at El Pilar that morning). Yucatan Flycatcher has grayer fringes to the greater coverts, tertials and secondaries, less rufous in the wings and tail, paler lores and a more rufous-toned crest – all of which showed up in the record shots taken at the scene. One of the few truly endemic species that we saw on the trip.

**Dusky-capped Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tuberculifer*— scarce, but we did have good views with Isaias at Black Rock Lodge and on the El Pilar Road in the first few days of the trip.

**Great Crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus crinitus* — single wintering individuals were noted at a wide range of sites on at least six dates.

**Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus* – really excellent views of a pair while searching for Yucatan Flycatchers on the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and another pair at Num Li Punit on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus*— very much a ‘classic’ on any trip to the tropics, heard and seen throughout much of the tour but by far the most common south of Hopkins Bay.

**Boat-billed Flycatcher** *Megarynchus pitangua*— similar to Great Kiskadee in appearance but distinct vocal differences to helped pick them out at the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and near Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Social Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes similis*— often abundant, especially in the south around Big Falls being found around gardens, villages and habitation in general. On the other hand, curiously absent at the higher elevations in pine country.....

**Piratic Flycatcher** *Legatus leucophaeus* – really nice views of a single calling in the tall trees by the Chesnut-headed Oropendula colony on the Cockscomb Basin access road on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, and subsequently heard on two dates thereafter. For Steve, this bird was the harbinger of spring.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus*— ubiquitous. ‘TKs’ were seen on all the days of the tour.

**Couch’s Kingbird** *Tyrannus couchii*— extremely similar to the more widespread Tropical Kingbird and only reliably separable by voice. Vocalizing singles were picked out at three widely scattered locations including Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher** *Tyrannus savana*—really immaculate views of birds perched on roadside wires at Spanish Lookout when as many as 10 could be watched actively fly-catching. Later in the tour we enjoyed more excellent views in the savannah at Bladen Nature Reserve on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **VIREOS: Vireonidae (7)**

**Green Shrike-Vireo** *Vireolanius pulchellus*— two heard and ultimately seen well in the broadleaf forest along the entrance road to Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Always a thrilling species to observe, the leafy-green plumage enhancing the species’ ability to ‘vaporize’ in the canopy making the views we had all the more remarkable – score!

**Tawny-crowned Greenlet** *Tunchiornis ochraceiceps* – super views of a small flock (about five) along the trails at Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Lesser Greenlet** *Pachysylvia decurtata*— a tiny ‘vireo’ first seen at Black Rock Lodge on the first morning and subsequently found around mixed feeding flocks on five more days of the tour. Tunicha Ecological Reserve offered the best views.

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*— a fairly common winterer and transient, especially in the second half of the tour with good numbers seen and heard in the Big Falls area, Toledo District. Very vocal at this time of year, many of them singing.

**Mangrove Vireo** *Vireo pallens* — a calling individual was pointed out by Isaias at one of the short stops on Black Rock Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-throated Vireo** *Vireo flavifrons*— singles were seen and heard on four dates, with the best views of this visitor from North America at Num Li Punit Archeological site on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Philadelphia Vireo** *Vireo philadelphicus* – two on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>, foraging in the sub-canopy at Tunicha Ecological Reserve near Punta Gorda.

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae (2)**

**Brown Jay** *Psilorhinus morio*— this large, raucous jay was found on every single day of the tour being particularly abundant in and around Big Falls in Toledo District.

**Green Jay** *Cyanocorax yncas* – about three seen briefly at the random roadside stop for our first Lesson’s Motmot at Noh Beh Tanah on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> in the foothills below Mountain Pine Ridge.

### **SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae (6)**

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*— small flocks (up to 15) noted at Black Rock, Spanish Lookout and San Ygnacio in early part of the tour but seemingly absent further south in Stan Creek and Toledo Districts.

**Purple Martin** *Progne subis*— a small flock of 10 northbound migrants were found resting at Noh Beh Tanah as we climbed through the foothills toward pine country on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Gray-breasted Martin** *Progne chalybea*— a large, fairly common *hirundine* seen on at least eight days of the tour especially near farmland and habitation. The largest numbers (30+) were at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*—reasonably large flocks (45+) over the wetlands at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>

**Mangrove Swallow** *Tachycineta albilinea*— always a charmer, several were found close to rivers and wetlands on three days of the journey.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*— quite scarce, small flocks being noted on just three dates at wetland sites with up to 15 at Spanish Lookout, Hopkins and the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls.

### **GNATCATCHERS: Polioptilidae (3)**

**Long-billed Gnatwren** *Ramphocaenus melanurus*— nice views of a single at Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> after a ‘heard-only’ observation at Cockscomb Basin on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**White-browed Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila bilineata*— a pair associating with a feeding flock on the trail by the entrance to Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*— a breeding species in Belize as well as a winterer and migrant from North America, we saw singles on only two days of the trip in the vicinity of Big Falls.

### **WRENS: Troglodytidae (7)**

**Nightingale Wren** *Microcerculus philomela*— incredible to hear this vocal acrobat singing only feet away Num Li Punit and yet, aside from furtive movements in the shadows and leaf litter, it remained almost entirely unseen. We did rather better for good views of Wood thrush and Mayan Anthrush in the same spot!

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*— uncommon and found only at Big Falls on two days of the tour.

**Band-backed Wren** *Campylorhynchus zonatus*— what a treat to observe this large wren at close range in Belize Botanic Gardens on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>. We had three individuals that appeared to be socially engaged in building a large, domed nest in the fronds of a palm near the entrance. Isaiah was so thrilled and spent some time photographing them, such was the opportunity.

**Spot-breasted Wren** *Pheugopedius maculipectus*— a loud, vocal wren and often devilishly difficult to see, but we got lucky several times with great views at Cockscomb Basin and along the entrance road to the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Cabanis’s Wren** *Cantorchilus modestus* (HO)— we played hide and seek with a single calling by the tracks near King Vulture Falls, Hidden Valley Reserve on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> but aside from a few fleeting flight views, the wren won!

**White-bellied Wren** *Uropsila leucogastra*— a single during a spell of avian mayhem on the El Pilar Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, pointed out by Isaiah.

**White-breasted Wood-Wren** *Henicorhina leucosticta*— an understory species difficult to observe but we did eventually have great views of a couple working around fallen logs on the Blue Creek Trail on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: Mimidae (2)**

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*— common and found wintering in modest numbers at all of our bases on every day of the tour - easily detected the familiar kitten like ‘mew’ calls.

**Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus*— fairly widespread with pairs being noted on six days especially along the roadside during the drive from Hopkins to Big Falls on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae (2)**

**Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*—a North American breeding bird wintering in Belize and detected mostly by vocals in wood lots and forest on at least six days of the tour. Belize Botanic Gardens had good numbers, as did the Big Falls area.  
**Clay-colored Thrush** *Turdus grayi*— most abundant in the south though noted in small numbers from the outset when we saw our first at Cheers Restaurant along the Western Highway.

#### **WAXWINGS: Bombycillidae (1)**

**Cedar Waxwing** *Bombycilla cedrorum* - a surprise pair at Cheers Restaurant along the Western Highway on the very first afternoon of the trip, Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>. An irregular transient and winter visitor to Belize.

#### **FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae (4)**

**Scrub Euphonia** *Euphonia affinis* – great views of a sizeable feeding flock with other seed-eating finches and buntings at Bullet Tree Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and followed later in the tour by two more at Big Falls on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Yellow-throated Euphonia** *Euphonia hirundinacea*— a relatively common little passerine found on seven days and proving to be pretty widespread from day one. Especially close views were enjoyed at resort gardens, feeders and water features.

**Olive-backed Euphonia** *Euphonia gouldi* – this beauty could often be found at incredibly close range at the balcony feeders at Black Rock. They were not shy and proved to be very, very photogenic. We also came upon small flocks at Cockscomb Basin feeding in fruiting trees and at the feeders at the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Black-headed Siskin** *Spinus notatus* – a beautiful upland finch found in several locations at Mountain Pine Ridge all on one specific day - Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. Small flocks were usually detected by their tinkling call notes with especially good views from the public viewing area at 1000 foot falls.

#### **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae (4)**

**Green-backed Sparrow** *Arremonops chloronotus*—we worked hard to secure good views on Black Rock Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and at Mountain Pine Ridge on the 26<sup>th</sup> but ultimately had the best looks at Cockscomb Basin Visitor Center on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> when a bold male sang out in the open for some time.

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina* - several small flocks (5 – 8) along the sandy entrance road to Red Bank Village as we drove across pine savannah habitat on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Orange-billed Sparrow** *Arremon aurantirostris* – a most distinctive sparrow seen foraging in the leaf litter and dense understory at the Lodge Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> and heard again the following day.

**Rusty Sparrow** *Aimophila rufescens* – really great views of this large, intriguing sparrow at King Vulture Falls, Hidden Valley Reserve and during the long drive to Caracol - all of them in pine country. Less expected was a singing male in the grasslands at Bladen Reserve on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> as we journeyed south towards Big Falls.

#### **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: Icteriidae (1)**

**Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens* - singles seen or heard calling at Black Rock Road, and near the Lodge at Big Falls on three days of the tour.

#### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES: Icteridae (14)**

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*— noted in small numbers on at least four days, all of them in grasslands and/or savannah with up to half-a-dozen at Spanish Lookout, Hidden Valley Reserve, Douglas Da Silva Forest Camp and Sittee River Road, Hopkins Bay.

**Yellow-billed Cacique** *Amblycercus holosericeus*— a notoriously difficult species to actually see, most of our observations were of the ‘heard-only’ type but we did eventually have very good views behind the kitchen at the Lodge at Big Falls on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Chestnut-headed Oropendola** *Psarocolius wagleri* – Steve knew of an actively colony on the access road to Cockscomb Basin and sure enough we saw around 20 pendant nests suspended in trees high above the road, many of which appeared to be occupied. Great views of 12 – 15 individuals birds, this being the smallest oropendula in the Central American region.



**Montezuma Oropendola** *Psarocolius montezuma*— we came across a small active colony at Caracol National Monument with several parasitic Giant Cowbirds in close attendance, plus singles were seen near Red Bank Village and at Tunicha Ecological Reserve in the latter half of the tour.

**Black-cowled Oriole** *Icterus prothemelas*— an attractive oriole recorded on five days of the tour most regularly around the main lodge building at Big Falls in the latter half of the trip.

**Orchard Oriole** *Icterus spurius*— common but only from Hopkins Bay southwards where we saw them feeding in fruiting and flowering trees and usually in mixed flocks with other orioles.

**Yellow-backed Oriole** *Icterus chrysater* (LO) – an unscheduled stop for a locally rare Red-tailed Hawk on the way back from Caracol on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> led to a ‘natural break’ that led to a Yellow-backed Oriole in the bushes! The following day another three or four were in the gardens at Hidden Valley Inn on a damp, misty morning as we prepared for departure.

**Yellow-tailed Oriole** *Icterus mesomelas* – individual males seen well by the river overlook at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>, and two together by the ‘Dump’ near Big Falls on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Baltimore Oriole** *Icterus galbula*— common, though mostly in the south on this trip with up to 20 recorded on each day from Hopkins Bay south to Punta Gorda.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*— rather scarce overall and noted on just three dates with the largest concentrations in the fields and wetlands of Spanish Lookout (c.150) and along the causeway at Hopkins Wetlands (c.35).

**Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus* – frequently seen along the access road to the Lodge at Big Falls including a remarkable concentration of c.160 ground feeding on Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>, most of which were males!

**Giant Cowbird** *Molothrus oryzivorus* – at least three of these brood parasites were hanging close to a colony of Montezuma Oropendulas near the central acropolis at Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>. Later in the trip, we found them regularly along the access road to the Lodge at Big Falls, and also during the morning visit to Num Li Punit.

**Melodious Blackbird** *Dives dives*— the loud and varied fluty song was heard at many locations throughout the tour, this species being seen on every single day of the trip.

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*—daily fare throughout the trip though notably less common in Mountain Pine Ridge.

### **NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae (21)**

**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapilla* – two showed particularly well around the ruins at Num Li Punit. Very cool to see Ovenbirds in March!

**Worm-eating Warbler** *Helmitheros vermivorum*— great views of a singles in mixed feeding flocks at Blue Hole National Park, the Lodge at Big Falls and Num Li Punit.

**Louisiana Waterthrush** *Parkesia motacilla* – encountered along streams and rivers on three days including Black Rock, Num Li Punit and Blue Creek.

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis*— common and found in a wide variety of habitats (not always close to water). Seen on at least nine days of the tour, most easily around the casitas at the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Blue-winged Warbler** *Vermivora cyanoptera*—great views of at least two in mixed feeding flocks at Cockscomb Basin Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and at Tunicha on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia* – this little feathered zebra was fairly common in mixed feeding flocks during the first half of the trip, but rather scarce further south where it was found on just two dates.

**Tennessee Warbler** *Leiothlypis peregrina* – singles by the river overlook at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and at Tunicha on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Gray-crowned Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis poliocephala*— we got very lucky in having two individual males perch in the open on roadside wires; one at Spanish Lookout on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and another at Sittee River Road, Hopkins Bay on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>. Also heard and briefly seen at Black Rock Road, and in the grasslands at Bladen Reserve.

**Kentucky Warbler** *Geothlypis formosa*— good views of several males at four sites in the southern portion of the trip including Cockscomb Basin and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*— scarce on this tour with wintering birds seen or heard only at two wetland sites; Spanish Lookout (6) on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and Hopkins Bay (2) on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Hooded Warbler** *Setophaga citrina*— a smart little warbler mostly active in low understory and seen quite frequently on this trip with especially good views at Caracol, Cockscomb Basin, the Lodge at Big Falls and Num Li Punit.

**American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla*— fairly common amid mixed feeding flocks in the second half of the tour from Cockscomb Basin south to Punta Gorda.

**Northern Parula** *Setophaga americana*— a single by the river overlook at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>....the only sighting for the whole tour.

**Magnolia Warbler** *Setophaga magnolia*— the most commonly encountered wintering wood-warbler of the tour, often present in mixed flocks in a wide variety of locations and elevations.

**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*— first noted at Hopkins Bay on Feb 28<sup>th</sup> followed by sightings at wetlands from Hopkins south to Big Falls on four consecutive dates.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler** *Setophaga pensylvanica* – up to five or six per day in mixed feeding flocks in the second half of the tour at sites such as Cockscomb Basin, Big Falls and Tunicha Ecological Reserve. Some had well marked chestnut blaze on the flanks.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronate* – close eye-level views of a party of five or so migrants in front of the public viewing area overlooking 1000 foot falls.

**Yellow-throated Warbler** *Setophaga dominica*— always a stunner, we found this beauty at Belize Botanic Gardens on the Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, and at 1000 foot falls, perhaps one of the most attractive wintering wood-warblers to be found in Belize.

**Grace's Warbler** *Setophaga graciae* – good views of singing males and pairs at Mountain Pine Ridge, especially by the public viewing area overlooking 1000 foot falls on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** *Setophaga virens*— great views of wintering individuals with mixed feeding flocks at Mountain Pine Ridge on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> as well as at three other widely scattered sites during the course of the journey.

**Rufous-capped Warbler** *Basileuterus rufifrons* – who could forget the point blank views of this feisty little warbler at Mountain Pine Ridge, especially the photogenic pair at the reserve gate that Ed and Isaias enjoyed so much. Seen on just two dates in pine habitat at the higher elevations.

**Golden-crowned Warbler** *Basileuterus culicivorus* – a resident warbler which we found a couple of times in humid broadleaf forests; once at the El Pilar Road with Isaias, and again at Caracol with Marvin. Admittedly a skulking species though we were eventually rewarded with good views.

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla* – one of several warbler species seen amid the feeding flocks at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS AND ALLIES: Cardinalidae (12)**

**Gray-throated Chat** *Granatellus sallaei* – a pair in the dense thickets along Black Rock Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>. Isaias new of a reliable spot along the road and duly delivered with good-to-excellent views of this skulking and attractive regional endemic - its range being restricted to Southern Mexico and northern Central America.

**Hepatic Tanager** *Piranga flava* – remarkable eye-level views of males and females at the viewing area overlooking 1000 foot falls on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. Another was seen the following day on the journey to Caracol.

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*— ‘wintering’ summer tanagers appeared at Belize Botanic Gardens on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and then subsequently on five dates from Red Bank Village southwards.

**Red-crowned Ant-Tanager** *Habia rubra* – two were behind the staff housing and laundry area on the very first afternoon at Black Rock Lodge, amazingly the only sighting for the whole tour.

**Red-throated Ant-Tanager** *Habia fuscicauda*— though present at Black Rock Lodge we had much more success with this species in the humid, broadleaf forests from the Hummingbird Highway south to Punta Gorda. Fairly large ‘chattering’ flocks were present at Cockscomb Basin and the Lodge at Big Falls for example, and the species was noted on seven straight days in the latter half of the tour.

**Black-faced Grosbeak** *Caryothraustes poliogaster* – really excellent views of a pair close to Red Bank Village on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>. Otherwise, our experience was limited to a ‘heard-only’ observation in pine country on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*— a steady sequence of sightings on four consecutive days from Mar 1<sup>st</sup> perhaps indicating a ‘wave’ of migrants with as many as ten around Red Bank Village on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> including some fine males.  
**Blue-black Grosbeak** *Cyanoloxia cyanooides*— despite its heavy bill and chunky proportions this hefty grosbeak can be a real skulker so we did especially well to see it at Black Rock and El Pilar Roads, as well as lower Mountain Pine Ridge and Cockscomb Basin.

**Blue Bunting** *Cyanocompsa parellina*— a beautiful bunting, seen very well at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> (a singing male) and the Black Rock access road on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea*— a nice spread of sightings with small groups found at sites such as Hidden Valley Reserve and the pasture near the Lodge at Big Falls on at least six days of the trip.

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* – small flocks in the organic gardens at Black Rock Lodge, plus others along Bullet Tree Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and in the tall grasses along the entrance to the Lodge at Big Falls on at least two days.

**Painted Bunting** *Passerina ciris* – we enjoyed small numbers of this feathered gem at Bullet Tree Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, and then somewhat frequently in the tall grasses along the entrance road to the Lodge at Big Falls on three days.

### **TANAGERS AND ALLIES: Thraupidae (17)**

**Gray-headed Tanager** *Eucometis penicillata* – found on three days of the trip and usually seen following feeding flocks; at Green Hills Butterfly Ranch, Cockscomb Basin and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Crimson-collared Tanager** *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus* – great views of this beauty in the gardens by the visitor center at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup> and again at Big Falls two days later.

**Scarlet-rumped Tanager** *Ramphocelus passerinii* – a dazzling tanager seen well at Cockscomb Basin and the ‘Dump’ at Big Falls.

**Blue-gray Tanager** *Thraupis episcopus*— decidedly scarce being noted on just three dates after the first at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Yellow-winged Tanager** *Thraupis abbas*— mind blowing views of this beauty as they came in to freshly sliced fruits at the balcony feeders at Black Rock Lodge on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, but scarce thereafter with three at Red Bank Village on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> being the only other sighting for the remainder of the trip.

**Golden-hooded Tanager** *Tangara larvata*— beautiful and much sought-after, first found at Cockscomb Basin in the picnic area and subsequently seen on three other days, all in the south including amazing views at Tunicha Ecological Reserve where they fed at close range on fruiting White Maya Trees.

**Red-legged Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes cyaneus*— a smart little passerine often found in or around mixed feeding flocks; at Black Rock Lodge, Belize Botanic Gardens, Cockscomb Basin and Big Falls. Up to 15 noted on five days of the tour with especially good views at the balcony feeders at Black Rock Lodge.

**Green Honeycreeper** *Chlorophanes spiza* – great studeis of this spectacular honeycreeper at Cockscomb Basin and from Nick’s balcony at Tunicha Ecological Reserve on the penultimate day.

**Blue-black Grassquit** *Volatinia jacarina*— not quite as abundant as Morrelet’s Seedeater but equally widespread and present in similar habitats, especially along the entrance to the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Thick-billed Seed-Finch** *Sporophila funereal* – a singing male showed quite well at the entrance to Mountain Pine Ridge on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. Later in the tour, a pair were seen near Cockscomb Basin.

**Variable Seedeater** *Sporophila corvina* – a single in Mountain Pine Ridge along the road to Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup>, and a couple of pairs often present with other seed-eating species along the entrance to the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Morelet’s Seedeater** *Sporophila moreletii*— very common throughout much of the tour, usually found in small flocks in grasses by the roadside, and along fence lines and field edges.

**Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivaceus* – widespread but not especially common with most being seen from Hopkins Bay southwards on six days of the tour. The rough pasture along the approach to the Lodge at Big Falls was the most consistent spot.

**Grassland Yellow-Finch** *Sicalis luteola* - a chance visit to the savannah at Bladen Nature Reserve on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> produced two or three of these tiny grassland finches zipping back and forth over the sandy track. Most were in flight and best identified by

the wispy 'siik' flight calls, but a couple landed to offer brief perched views before dropping down in to the grasses. Not an easy species and it was certainly good to have the benefit of Steve's experience on board.

**Buff-throated Saltator** *Saltator maximus* – a great trip for views of this species, seen on four dates from Cockscomb Basin southwards including regularly on the feeders at the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Black-headed Saltator** *Saltator atriceps*— the largest of the saltator family and often in noisy, babbling groups at sites such as the El Pilar Road, Belize Botanic Gardens, Hidden Valley and Big Falls on at least six days of the trip.

**Cinnamon-bellied Saltator** *Saltator grandis* – a subtly attractive saltator found just twice on the tour with super views of a couple of singing individuals near the Swasey River at Red Bank on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* – the familiar 'chiip-chirp' of *Passer domesticus* almost went unnoticed at the Uno Wharf in Punta Gorda on Mar 5<sup>th</sup>, and again at Punta Gorda airport the following day.

#### **MAMMALS (8 species recorded):**

**Yucatan Black Howler Monkey** *Alouatta pigra*— we heard them at Black Rock Lodge close to the cabins, at the El Pilar Road and at Cockscomb Basin but it would have been nice to see and hear a few more!

**Central American Spider Monkey** *Ateles geoffroyi*— two in the broadleaf forests on the El Pilar-Bullet Tree Road on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Depp's Squirrel** *Sciurus deppi* – smaller than the Yucatan Squirrel and sometimes found scavenging at the feeders at Black Rock Lodge, and the Lodge at Big Falls.

**Yucatan Squirrel** *Sciurus yucatanensis*— found in the early part of the tour at Belize Botanic Gardens, Black Rock Lodge and Mountain Pine Ridge.

**Central American Agouti** *Dasyprocta punctata*— rather shy but often present around the lodge at Big Falls.

**Forest Rabbit** *Sylvilagus gabbi* – nice views of one hopping down the access road to the lodge at Big Falls on Mar 4<sup>th</sup>.

**White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica*— one was spotted at Cockscomb Basin on Mar 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Gray Fox** *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*— one dashed across the track as we drove along Black Rock Road on the first afternoon, Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (5 species recorded):**

**Morelet's Crocodile** *Crocodylus moreletii*— a smallish specimen seen basking at a stream crossing on the way to Caracol on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> - Marvin seemed confident that it would be there as we drove past and so it was.....

**Brown Basilisk** *Basiliscus vittatus* – brief but good looks at one on Black Rock Road on Feb 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Spiny-tailed Iguana** *Ctenosaura similis*— several seen on Black Rock Road and in the Belize Botanic Gardens on the same day, Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and then again much later in the tour at Big Falls.

**Meso-American Slider** *Trachemys venusta* – seen on small ponds at Belize Botanic Gardens and Green Hills Butterfly Ranch, and also at Piedra Lagoon.

**Yellow-red Rat Snake** *Pseudelaphe flavirufa* - a 'tropical' rat snake seen at Big Falls towards the end of the trip may have been this species.

#### **BUTTERFLIES**

We saw many different species including giant **Blue Morphos** and the fabulous **Owl Butterfly** but did not keep an overall tally. Of course we did get to see many native species during our visit to the fabulous Green Hills Butterfly Ranch with Marvin on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.