

Cuba

February 13-21, 1999

March 21-April 2, 1999

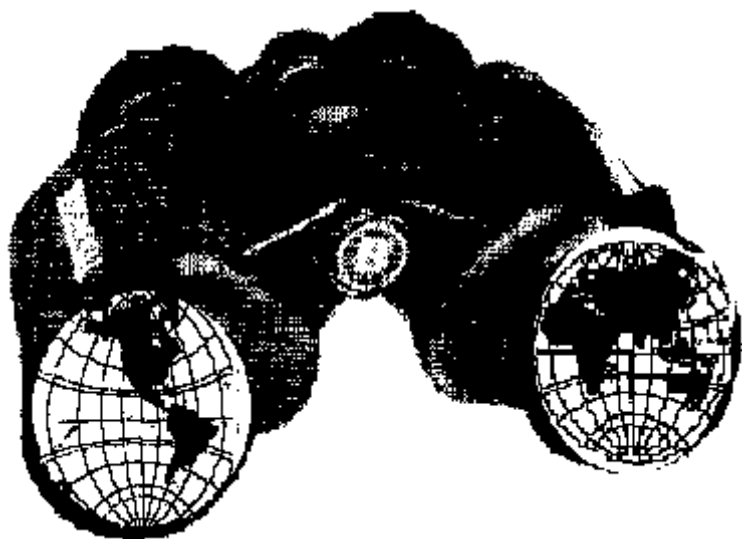
January 14-21, 2001

with 4 days in the Dominican Republic March 21-24

Report prepared by Mark Elwonger and Guy Kirwan

Notes on Jan 2001 trip by Sherri Labar

Printed on Wednesday, 28 March, 2001 in Victoria, Texas



ORNIFOLKS...

Safer than doing it alone

Less expensive than a professional tour

Policy Regarding Trip Leaders

The goal of our organization is to enable birders to visit difficult areas at less expense than with a professional group. If any Ornifolks member can set up trips for a fraction of the cost of a professional tour, find other members willing to participate, and go for less or at no cost, we see no ethical problem. Many participants don't have the time, expertise, or inclination to do the necessary research or make the preparations, but instead are willing to assist the leaders by defraying their expenses, and few potential organizers will step forward to lead a trip for nothing.

I wish to thank the participants and our Cuban guides: Arturo Kirkconnell, Osmaní González and Pedro Regalado, as well as Cubaturs representative Carlos Hernández and driver Ramon, for their great assistance in making these tours such a success.

GMK

Participants:

Feb Cuba: Louise Augustine, Barry Cooper, Fran Lenski, Gail Mackernian, Scott Marshall and Frank Murphy.

Mar DR: Louise Augustine, Chris Bradshaw, Ken Cole, Pearl Jordan, Sheila Mains, Craig Rudolph and Rick Schaefer.

Mar Cuba: Joel Abramson, Gary Abramson, David Beadle, Chris Bradshaw, Ken Cole, Walter Hughs, Pearl Jordan, Sheila Mains, Craig Rudolph, Rick Schaefer and Steve Whitehouse.

Besides serving as a bulletin board and providing its members with safe and economical ways to visit foreign birding destinations, *Ornifolks* offers members:

- ◆ Custom international birding
- ◆ a library of trip reports

Ornifolks in Cuba

	21-Mar	22-Mar	23-Mar	24-Mar	13-Feb	25-Mar	14-Feb	26-Mar	15-Feb	27-Mar	16-Feb	28-Mar	17-Feb	29-Mar	18-Feb	30-Mar	19-Feb	31-Mar	20-Feb	21-Feb	2-Apr		
Finches and Allies																							Fringillidae: Emberizini
Zapata Sparrow								1	h						4				2				<i>Torreornis inexpectata</i>
Finches and Allies																							Fringillidae: Cardinalini
Rose-breasted Grosbeak			1	2																			<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Indigo Bunting								1f															<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Finches and Allies																							Fringillidae: Icterini
Cuban Red-winged Blackbird								10	10		1		1										<i>Agelaius assimilis</i>
Tawny-shouldered Blackbird					x	2	x	10	10	1c	x	1c	x	1c	40	1c			x				<i>Agelaius humeralis</i>
... "Cuban" Meadowlark																							<i>Stumella (m.) hippocrepis</i>
Cuban Blackbird					x	2	x	5	10	x	10	2	2	4	7	1c				x	2		<i>Dives atrovioacea</i>
Greater Antillean Grackle	1	1	1	1	x	x	6	x	x	1	2	x	2	2	3	2	x		x	x	1c		<i>Quiscalus niger</i>
Shiny Cowbird						2	x												2	x			<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
... "Greater Antillean" Oriole	1	1	1	1	10	x			2		2		2	2									<i>Icterus (d.) dominicensis</i>
Finches and Allies																							Fringillidae: Carduelini
White-winged Crossbill		1																					<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>
Finches and Allies																							Fringillidae: Drepanidini
Antillean Siskin		1	2																				<i>Carduelis dominicensis</i>
Sparrows and Allies																							Passeridae
House Sparrow	x		x		1	x		1		1			x	x	x	x		2	x	x	x		<i>Passer (d.) domesticus</i>
Village Weaver	10	x		10																			<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Sparrows and Allies																							Passeridae: Estrildini
Nutmeg Mannikin				10																			<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>

The Butterfly List (incomplete)
by David Beadle

- Historis odius odius*
- Junonia sp*
- Anartia jatrophae guantanamo*
- Siproeta stelenes biplagiata*
- Heliconius charitonia ramsdeni*
- Dryas iulia nudeola*
- Agraulis vanillae insularis*
- Leptotes cassius theonus*
- Eurema sp*
- Phoebis philea huebneri*
- Heraclides andraemon andraemon*
- Urbanus dorantes santiago*
- Astrartes habana habana*
- Pyrgus oileus oileus*
- Euphyes sp*

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Old World Flycatchers and Allies																						Muscicapidae	
Cuban Solitaire																					8	5	<i>Myadestes elisabeth</i>
... "Rufous-throated" Solitaire			h																				<i>Myadestes (g.) genibarbis</i>
La Selle Thrush			h	fc																			<i>Turdus swalesi</i>
... "Western" Red-legged Thrush	1	5		5	6		10	fc	4	fc	5	fc					h	2	6	20	fc		<i>Turdus (p.) plumbeus</i>
Starlings and Allies																						Sturnidae: Mimini	
Gray Catbird					1		4	2	x	x	x	5	fc										<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Northern Mockingbird	fc	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Bahama Mockingbird														2	2								<i>Mimus gundlachi</i>
Waxwings and Allies																						Bombycillidae: Bombycillini	
Cedar Waxwing							16																<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
Palmchat	fc	x	>10	x																			<i>Dulus dominicus</i>
Finches and Allies																						Fringillidae: Parulini	
Blue-winged Warbler																							<i>Vermivora pinus</i>
Northern Parula			1		8		10	2	1														<i>Parula americana</i>
... "Yellow" Warbler																							<i>Dendroica (p.) aestiva</i>
... "Golden" Warbler																							<i>Dendroica (p.) petechia</i>
Magnolia Warbler			1				2	1															<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>
Cape May Warbler		6	1	1			1	1															<i>Dendroica tigrina</i>
Black-throated Blue Warbler	2	1	2	1			20	1	2	1													<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>
... "Myrtle" Warbler			x	5					10	1													<i>Dendroica (c.) coronata</i>
Black-throated Green Warbler				3					8	2													<i>Dendroica virens</i>
Yellow-throated Warbler					4	1	10	6															<i>Dendroica dominica</i>
Olive-capped Warbler						1																	<i>Dendroica pityophila</i>
Pine Warbler		4	h																	10	fc		<i>Dendroica pinus</i>
Kirtland's Warbler							2	1?															<i>Dendroica kirtlandii</i>
Prairie Warbler	2	2	2	1	3																		<i>Dendroica discolor</i>
Palm Warbler		2	2																				<i>Dendroica palmarum</i>
Black-and-white Warbler								fc															<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
American Redstart	2	2	1	1	1	1	4	x	2	x	2												<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Worm-eating Warbler			1	1	1			fc	1	fc													<i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>
Overbird	7	1	1				6	2	4	x	2	2											<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>
Northern Waterthrush							5		1	1	1												<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>
Louisiana Waterthrush																							<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>
Common Yellowthroat					8	1																	<i>Geothlypis (t.) trichas</i>
Green-tailed Warbler		3	10	1				fc															<i>Microligea palustris</i>
Yellow-headed Warbler			2						20	1	5	2										5	<i>Teretistris fernandinae</i>
Oriente Warbler									fc		2												<i>Teretistris fornsi</i>
Hooded Warbler						1			1	1	2	5											<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>
White-winged Warbler			3																				<i>Xenoligea montana</i>
Finches and Allies																						Fringillidae: Thraupini	
... "Common" Bananaquit	3	fc																					<i>Coereba (f.) flaveola</i>
Black-crowned Palm-Tanager		5	fc																				<i>Phaenicophilus palmarum</i>
Eastern Chat Tanager		2	10	x																			<i>Calyptrophilus frugivorus</i>
Stripe-headed Tanager							3																<i>Spindalis (z.) zena</i>
... "Hispaniolan" Tanager			4	fc																			<i>Spindalis (z.) dominicensis</i>
Antillean Euphonia				5																			<i>Euphonia musica</i>
Red-legged Honeycreeper																							<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>
Cuban Bullfinch							10																<i>Melopyrrha nigra</i>
Cuban Grassquit								2															<i>Tiaris canora</i>
Yellow-faced Grassquit	1		fc						x	6	2												<i>Tiaris olivacea</i>
Greater Antillean Bullfinch	2	5	4	1	2	x																	<i>Loxigilla violacea</i>

The Itineraries

February Cuba

- 12-Feb-99 Habana to Hacienda la Guamá (Crocodile Farm)
- 13-Feb-99 La Guamá, Bermajas, Cueva de los Peces
- 14-Feb-99 Peralta, Mera, Los Sabalos, Playa Larga
- 15-Feb-99 La Guamá, Palpite, La Ceiba, Cueva de los Peces
- 16-Feb-99 La Guamá Camagüey
- 17-Feb-99 La Belén, Najasa, Morón, Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo
- 18-Feb-99 Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Cayo Romano, => Cayo Paredón-Grande
- 19-Feb-99 Cayo Coco => Ciudad La Habana
- 20-Feb-99 P.N. La Güira

March Dominican Republic

- 21-Mar-99 Santo Domingo to Barahona to Puerto Escondido
- 22-Mar-99 Barahona south and west: La Mercedes (ALCOA road), Cabo Rojo, Laguna Oviedo, Barahona
- 23-Mar-99 Barahona to Duvergé to El Aguacate to Zapotén to Duvergé
- 24-Mar-99 Puerto Escondido: Duvergé to Puerto Escondido to Laguna del Rincón to Barahona to Santo Domingo

March Cuba

- 25-Mar-99 La Habana to La Guamá
- 26-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula Peralta to Palpite to Turba
- 27-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula La Guamá to Meja to La Ceiba to Cuera de los Peces
- 28-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula Los Sabalos to Cueva de los Peces
- 29-Mar-99 La Guamá to Camagüey
- 30-Mar-99 Camagüey to Najasa to La Belén to Cayo Guillermo
- 31-Mar-99 Cayo Coco to Cayo Romano to Cayo Paredón-Grande
- 01-Apr-99 Cayo Guillermo => Ciudad La Habana
- 02-Apr-99 La Güira National Park



March Cuba (after the trip):

Starting back row, from left: Steve Whitehouse, Mark Elwonger, David Beadle, Walter Hughs, Rick Schaefer; middle row: Carlos Hernández, Pearl Jordan, Craig Rudolph, Gary Abramson, Joel Abramson, Guy Kirwan; bottom row: Chris Bradshaw, Ken Cole, Sheila Mains, and Arturo Kirkconnell.

Ornifolks in Cuba

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Todies																						Todidae	
Cuban Tody							3	10	h	h	1	3				h		2		4	5	<i>Todus multicolor</i>	
Broad-billed Tody	3	1 fc	10 fc	fc																		<i>Todus subulatus</i>	
Narrow-billed Tody																						<i>Todus angustirostris</i>	
Cerylid Kingfishers																						Cerylidae	
Belted Kingfisher	1				1		1	4	6	1	1	1	3									<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	
Woodpeckers																						Picidae	
Antillean Piculet		fc	10 2																			<i>Nesocites micromegas</i>	
Hispaniolan Woodpecker			fc	fc																		<i>Melanerpes striatus</i>	
West Indian Woodpecker					4 2																	<i>Melanerpes (s.) superciliaris</i>	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker							1 h 2	5	1 h h	3 1 7	h 1 3	2 2 8		6		3	6			h		<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	
Cuban Green Woodpecker							4 h 4	5	1 h h	3 1 7	h 1 3	2 2 8		6		3	6					<i>Xiphidiopicus percussus</i>	
... "Cuban" Flicker							2 4 1	h 2	h	pr	h 1 3	h 2 2 8		1		1	2			2	1	<i>Colaptes (a.) chrysocaulosus</i>	
Fernandina's Flicker							4 h 4	5	h	pr	h 2 2 8		2	6		2	6					<i>Colaptes fernandinae</i>	
Tyrant Flycatchers and Allies																						Tyrannidae	
Greater Antillean Elaenia				6																		<i>Elaenia fallax</i>	
Eastern Wood-Pewee																						<i>Contopus virens</i>	
Cuban Pewee							3	fc	x		x	fc		2								<i>Contopus caribaeus</i>	
Hispaniolan Pewee	1	1	5	2			fc	4	x	fc	x	fc		2								<i>Contopus hispaniolensis</i>	
La Sagra's Flycatcher							4	4	4	4	6	5		1		1	3			1	2	<i>Myiarchus sagrae</i>	
Stolid Flycatcher	2 1+h	3	5	2																		<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>	
Gray Kingbird		12	3				2	3	4	4	4	2	1	5		3	5					<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	
Loggerhead Kingbird			10	5			2	3	4	2	4	2	1	5		3	3			2	4	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	
Giant Kingbird			1	fc	5		2	2	2	4	4	2	1	5		5	h			3	3	<i>Tyrannus cubensis</i>	
Vireos																						Vireonidae	
White-eyed Vireo																1						<i>Vireo (g.) griseus</i>	
Thick-billed Vireo																						<i>Vireo (c.) crassirostris</i>	
Cuban Vireo							2	5		6	2	4		4								<i>Vireo gundlachi</i>	
Flat-billed Vireo			2	3																		<i>Vireo nanus</i>	
Yellow-throated Vireo											1											<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	
Black-whiskered Vireo	h	fc	2	fc	3			fc		fc	fc	fc	h		h						fc	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	
Crows and Allies																						Corvidae: Corvini	
Hispaniolan Palm Crow		7																				<i>Corvus palmarum</i>	
Cuban Palm Crow																40	8					<i>Corvus minutus</i>	
Cuban Crow						6	2	1	6	2	5	2	2	1		10	8					<i>Corvus nasicus</i>	
White-necked Crow	3																					<i>Corvus leucognaphalus</i>	
Swallows and Allies																						Hirundinidae	
Purple Martin					10 sp																	<i>Progne subis</i>	
Cuban Martin						x		2						4	3	1						<i>Progne cryptoleuca</i>	
Caribbean Martin	5	4	5	1																		<i>Progne dominicensis</i>	
Tree Swallow		2						50	x	1000s	x	5	x	60	x				x	x	f	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	
Golden Swallow		10																				<i>Tachycineta euchrysea</i>	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	1	1					5	20				2										<i>Stelgidopteryx (s.) serripennis</i>	
... "Cinnamon-throated" Swallow								2					50			30						<i>Petrochelidon (f.) fulva</i>	
... "Barn" Swallow						1		3			5								1		6	<i>Hirundo (r.) erythrogaster</i>	
Northern Creepers and Allies																						Certhiidae	
Zapata Wren								2	1													<i>Ferminia cervical</i>	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					2		2		2						1							<i>Poliopitla caerulea</i>	
Cuban Gnatcatcher																3		7				<i>Poliopitla lembeyei</i>	

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Pigeons																						Columbidae	
Rock Dove		x				x																<i>Columba livia</i>	
Scaly-naped Pigeon			8	15			10															<i>Columba squamosa</i>	
White-crowned Pigeon			4	3			10	6														<i>Columba leucocephala</i>	
Plain Pigeon			h	h				4														<i>Columba inornata</i>	
White-winged Dove		2																				<i>Zenaida (a.) asiatica</i>	
Zenaida Dove		5	fc	fc				1	2													<i>Zenaida aurita</i>	
Mourning Dove		fc	fc	fc	fc			x	1													<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	
Common Ground-Dove		2	fc	fc	fc			x	x													<i>Columbina passerina</i>	
Key West Quail-Dove																						<i>Geotrygon chrysis</i>	
Gray-headed Quail-Dove								1s+1h														<i>Geotrygon caniceps</i>	
Ruddy Quail-Dove								2	1													<i>Geotrygon (m.) montana</i>	
Blue-headed Quail-Dove									5	h	1											<i>Stamoenas cyanocephala</i>	
Parrots																						Psittacidae	
Hispaniolan Parakeet				20																		<i>Aratinga chloroptera</i>	
Cuban Parakeet							x			14												<i>Aratinga euops</i>	
... "Jamaican" Parakeet			11	9																		<i>Aratinga (n.) nana</i>	
Cuban Parrot					2		4	4		4												<i>Amazona leucocephala</i>	
Hispaniolan Parrot	2	17	30	20																		<i>Amazona ventralis</i>	
American Cuckoos																						Coccyzidae	
Mangrove Cuckoo																						<i>Coccyzus minor</i>	
Great Lizard-Cuckoo		5				1	5	4	4	3	8		1	1	1	4	1					<i>Saurothera merlini</i>	
Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo			4	2h																		<i>Saurothera longirostris</i>	
Bay-breasted Cuckoo																						<i>Hyetornis ruticularis</i>	
Anis and Allies																						Crotophagidae: Crotophagini	
Smooth-billed Ani	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	
Barn and Grass Owls																						Tytonidae	
Barn Owl										h		h										<i>Tyto alba</i>	
Typical Owls																						Strigidae	
Cuban Screech-Owl							2	2		h												<i>Otus lawrencii</i>	
Bare-legged Owl						h	2	2	h	1+2h	h											<i>Glaucidium siju</i>	
Burrowing Owl		1	2	1																		<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	
Stygian Owl																					1	<i>Asio stygius</i>	
Nightjars and Allies																						Caprimulgidae	
Antillean Nighthawk									1f3			3										<i>Chordeiles gundlachi</i>	
Chuck-will's-widow																						<i>Caprimulgus carolinensis</i>	
Cuban Nightjar																						<i>Caprimulgus cubanensis</i>	
Hispaniolan Nightjar			h			1																<i>Caprimulgus ekmani</i>	
Typical Swifts																						Apodidae	
Chimney Swift																						<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	
Antillean Palm-Swift	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1		1						4	<i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>	
Hummingbirds																						Trochilidae	
Antillean Mango		x	x	1																		<i>Anthracothorax dominicus</i>	
Cuban Emerald							fc	x	fc	x	fc	1		1		2	4			5	2	<i>Chlorostilbon ricordii</i>	
Hispaniolan Emerald	1+2h	2	10	1																		<i>Chlorostilbon swainsonii</i>	
Vervain Hummingbird	1	4	1																			<i>Mellisuga minima</i>	
Bee Hummingbird							h		1f	3	6											<i>Mellisuga helenae</i>	
Trogons																						Trogonidae: Trogonini	
Cuban Trogon						2	5	2	4	4	fc									8	fc	<i>Priotelus temnurus</i>	
Hispaniolan Trogon		5	h																			<i>Priotelus roseigaster</i>	

Daily Notes

February Cuba

12-Feb-99 Havana to Hacienda la Guamá (Crocodile Farm)

Mid-morning departure from the Hotel Capri, Havana for Hacienda La Guama, Zapata, which is our base for the next four nights. In the afternoon we investigated the grounds of the nearby crocodile farm achieving views of several of the more widespread endemics and near-endemics, including the parrot, in the process.

13-Feb-99 La Guamá, Bermejas, Cueva de los Peces

On stepping off the boat from La Guama, we are greeted by a superb Cuban Pygmy Owl. During the rest of the morning we explore the nearby Bermejas area, which provides us with a host of new endemics: Bare-legged Owl, Fernandina's Flicker, Cuban Tody, Cuban Trogon, and Cuban Green Woodpecker included. There are also many Nearctic wood warblers present including a probable Kirtland's Warbler and several Worm-eating Warblers. A flock of 16 Cedar Waxwing is a nice find. Following lunch at Cueva de los Peces, where we finally meet up with Arturo Kirkconnell, we spend the afternoon searching for Blue-headed Quail-dove but only a couple of people manage a brief sighting. A Key West Quail-dove and superb Hooded Warbler prove to be more cooperative.

14-Feb-99 Peralta, Mera, Los Sabalos, Playa Larga

The morning is spent at Peralta, on the north side of the massive Zapata swamplands, where we achieve great views of Zapata Wren and hear 2 or 3 Zapata Rails at close quarters. Unfortunately, our efforts to corral the enigma come to nought. Other new endemics include Cuban Red-shouldered Blackbird. We spend the afternoon of this day in the Soplillar and Mera areas where the remainder of the group see and videotape Blue-headed Quail-dove, and we all see Bee Hummingbird, Cuban Nightjar and Key West Quail-dove. We round off a fine day with a splendid Stygian Owl at the usual site behind the Playa Larga resort swimming pool.

15-Feb-99 La Guamá, Palpité, La Ceiba, Cueva de los Peces

Ornifolks in Cuba

Day three is spent concentrating on Gray-headed Quail-dove at a usual site near Palpité. Eventually in the mid-afternoon we are successful. We also hear Blue-headed Quail-dove and record a brief flyover Gundlach's Hawk in this area. A brief break from our quail-dove search is taken at La Ceiba where a flock of the super-attractive Cuban Grassquit proves to be as accommodating as we wish the Gundlach's Hawk had been. The day ends with a boat trip at La Guamá that adds Snail Kite and Wood Duck to our ever-burgeoning trip list.

16-Feb-99 La Guamá to Camagüey

Following a last unsuccessful pre-breakfast search for Gundlach's Hawk from the La Guamá restaurant tower, we depart our island home for the long drive to Camagüey. Our only birding today is around Vertientes and this stop provides us with the only Eastern Meadowlarks of the trip. This distinctive taxon is currently the subject of DNA research. Overnight at the Gran Hotel.

17-Feb-99 La Belén, Najasa, Morón, Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo

One of our earliest starts of the trip sees us in position at La Belen National Forest in time to score approximately five Giant Kingbirds, almost 30 Cuban Parakeets and eight Plain Pigeons. Our mission accomplished we return to Camagüey via Najasa, where a flock of at least 40 Cuban Palm Crows (in company with the ubiquitous Cuban Crow) prove immediately cooperative. Breakfast, back at the hotel, provides us with excellent opportunities to study male and female Cuban Martins from the dining hall. We spend the middle half of the day driving to our overnight destination of Cayo Guillermo. Birding there and on Cayo Coco late in the day provides us with views of many of our target birds: Oriente Warbler, Zapata Sparrow, Bahama Mockingbird and Crab Hawk.

18-Feb-99 Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Cayo Romano, => Cayo Paredón-Grande

We spend a relatively leisurely day exploring four of the cays near Cayo Guillermo. Despite missing Piping Plover at Flamingo beach, we hone in on all our other day targets: Cuban Gnatcatcher, Thick-billed Vireo, and Mangrove Cuckoo.

19-Feb-99 Cayo Coco => Ciudad La Habana

A long day's drive back to Habana and the Hotel Capri.

20-Feb-99 P.N. La Güira

Ornifolks in Cuba

	21-Mar	22-Mar	23-Mar	24-Mar	13-Feb	25-Mar	14-Feb	26-Mar	15-Feb	27-Mar	16-Feb	28-Mar	17-Feb	29-Mar	18-Feb	30-Mar	19-Feb	31-Mar	20-Feb	21-Feb	2-Apr		
Falcons																							Falconidae
... "Crested" Caracara																							<i>Caracara (p.) cheriway</i>
American Kestrel		lc	lc																				<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Merlin				5																			<i>Falco columbarius</i>
Peregrine Falcon					1 x		2	x	3														<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Guineafowls																							Numididae
Helmeted Guineafowl		6		10			6									3							<i>Numida meleagris</i>
New World Quails																							Odontophoridae
Northern Bobwhite																						6	<i>Colinus virginianus</i>
Rails																							Rallidae
Clapper Rail																							<i>Rallus (L.) longirostris</i>
King Rail																							<i>Rallus elegans</i>
Sora																							<i>Porzana carolina</i>
Yellow-breasted Crake																							<i>Porzana flaviventer</i>
Zapata Rail																							<i>Cyanolimnas cerverai</i>
Purple Gallinule																							<i>Porphyryla martinica</i>
Common Moorhen																							<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
American Coot																							<i>Fulica americana</i>
Caribbean Coot																							<i>Fulica caribaea</i>
Limpkin																							Aramidae
Limpkin																							<i>Aramus guarana</i>
Plovers and Allies																							Charadriidae
Black-bellied Plover																							<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Semipalmated Plover																							<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Killdeer		5	6																				<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Plovers and Allies																							Charadriidae: Recurvirostrini
Black-necked Stilt		2			1																		<i>Himantopus (m.) mexicanus</i>
Jacanas																							Jacanidae
Northern Jacana																							<i>Jacana spinosa</i>
Snipe and Allies																							Scolopacidae
Greater Yellowlegs																							<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs																							<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Solitary Sandpiper																							<i>Tringa solitaria</i>
Willet																							<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper																							<i>Actitis macularia</i>
Ruddy Turnstone																							<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Sanderling																							<i>Calidris alba</i>
Semipalmated Sandpiper																							<i>Calidris pusilla</i>
Least Sandpiper																							<i>Calidris minutilla</i>
Stilt Sandpiper																							<i>Calidris himantopus</i>
Short-billed Dowitcher																							<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>
Gulls and Allies																							Laridae: Larini
Laughing Gull																							<i>Larus atricilla</i>
Herring Gull																							<i>Larus (a.) argentatus</i>
Gulls and Allies																							Laridae: Sternini
Caspian Tern																							<i>Sterna caspia</i>
Royal Tern																							<i>Sterna maxima</i>
Sandwich Tern																							<i>Sterna (s.) sandvicensis</i>
Common Tern																							<i>Sterna hirundo</i>

Ornifolks in Cuba

	21-Mar	22-Mar	23-Mar	24-Mar	13-Feb	25-Mar	14-Feb	26-Mar	15-Feb	27-Mar	16-Feb	28-Mar	17-Feb	29-Mar	18-Feb	30-Mar	19-Feb	31-Mar	20-Feb	21-Feb	2-Apr		
Grebes																							Podicipedidae
Pied-billed Grebe																							<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Pelecans and Allies																							Pelecanidae
Brown Pelican	1	9			1	5						1											<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>
Cormorants																							Phalacrocoracidae
Neotropic Cormorant					x		x																<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
Double-crested Cormorant					x		x		1	30	2		x										<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
Anhingas																							Anhingidae
Anhinga					2				1														<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>
Frigatebirds																							Fregatidae
Magnificent Frigatebird			4																				<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
Hérons																							Ardeidae
Least Bittern																							<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>
Great Blue Heron			1				2	1	5														<i>Ardea (h.) herodias</i>
... "Great White" Heron										1													<i>Ardea (h.) occidentalis</i>
Great Egret																							<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	1	2	1																				<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron																							<i>Egretta caerulea</i>
Tricolored Heron																							<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Reddish Egret																							<i>Egretta rufescens</i>
Cattle Egret	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	<i>Bubulcus (i.) ibis</i>
Green Heron	1	1																					<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron																							<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Ibises																							Threskiornithidae
White Ibis																							<i>Eudocimus albus</i>
Glossy Ibis																							<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Roseate Spoonbill		26																					<i>Ajaia ajaja</i>
Storks and Allies																							Ciconiidae
Turkey Vulture			1		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Flamingos																							Phoenicopteridae
... "American" Flamingo		60																					<i>Phoenicopterus (r.) ruber</i>
Ducks and Allies																							Anatidae: Anatini
Wood Duck																							<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Blue-winged Teal		7																					<i>Anas discors</i>
Northern Shoveler																							<i>Anas clypeata</i>
White-cheeked Pintail		10																					<i>Anas (b.) bahamensis</i>
Northern Pintail																							<i>Anas acuta</i>
Ring-necked Duck																							<i>Aythya collaris</i>
Red-breasted Merganser																							<i>Mergus serrator</i>
Hawks and Allies																							Accipitridae
Osprey	1	2																					<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
Snail Kite																							<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>
... "American" Harrier																							<i>Circus (c.) hudsonius</i>
Sharp-shinned Hawk																							<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
Gundlach's Hawk																							<i>Accipiter gundlachi</i>
... "Cuban" Black-Hawk																							<i>Buteogallus (a.) gundlachii</i>
Broad-winged Hawk																							<i>Buteo platypterus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2																					<i>Buteo (j.) jamaicensis</i>

Ornifolks in Cuba

An early start for La Güira National Park. This attractive area of forest in the west of the island is home to our two final target species: Cuban Solitaire and Olive-capped Warbler, both of which prove typically unproblematic to find. This area also gives us our final views of many of our favourite endemics: the tody, the trogon, Cuban Green Woodpecker, and Yellow-headed Warbler, as well as such attractive 'extras' as Western Stripe-headed Tanager, Red-legged Honeycreeper and Red-legged Thrush. Overnight at the Hotel Capri.

March Dominican Republic

20-Mar-99 Santo Domingo

GMK and CGB met KC and SM in Santo Domingo at 8am and proceeded, via the airport to check on KC's baggage, to the north coast near Los Hasitises National Park. A number of stops en route produced several of the more widespread endemics and good looks at the threatened Plain Pigeon, before we returned to the capital to meet the rest of the group who arrived that evening. Hotel in Santo Domingo.

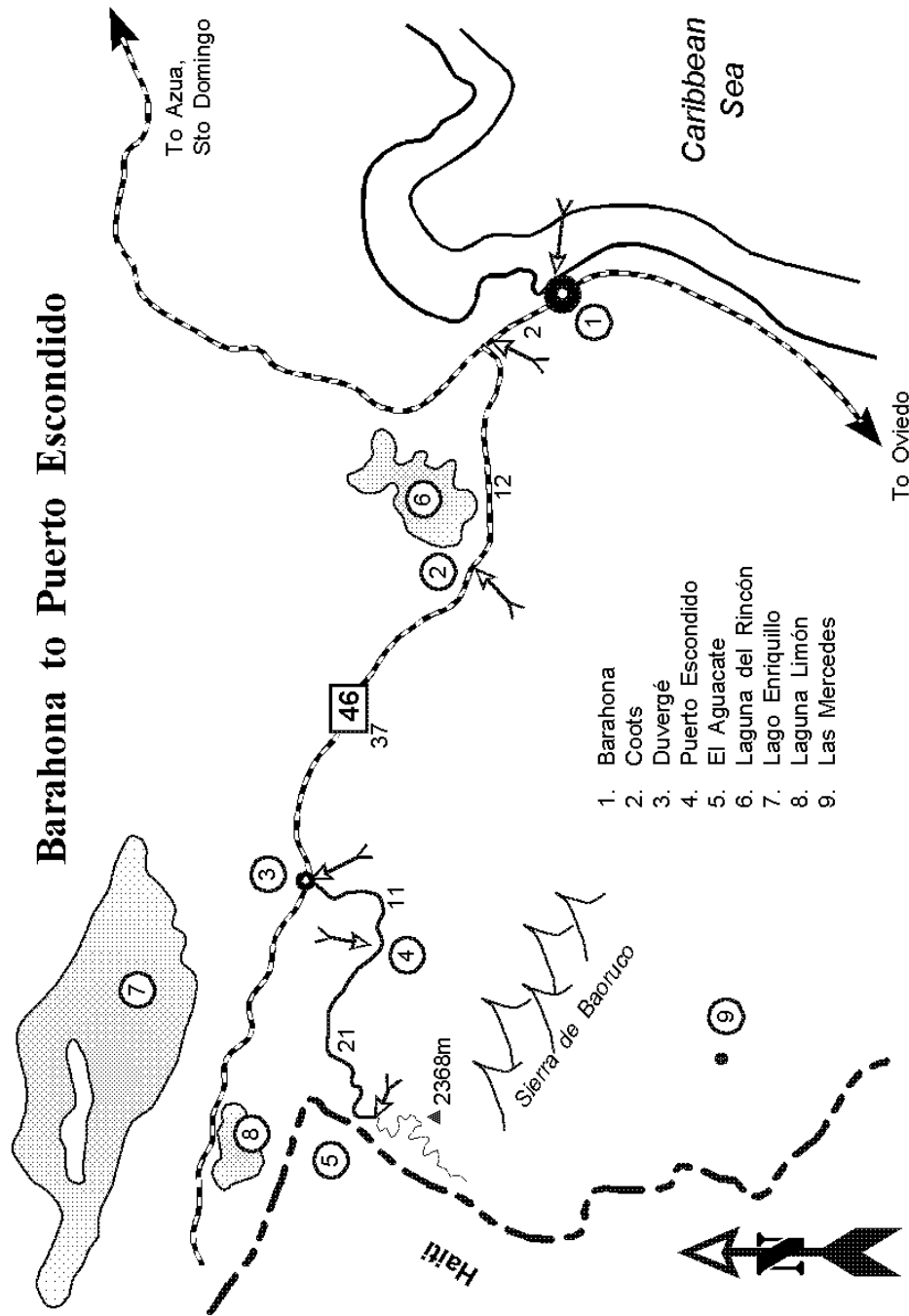
21-Mar-99 Santo Domingo to Barahona to Puerto Escondido

Early morning drive to Barahona. One car developed clutch problems and only just made it there. Budget promised and did deliver a replacement vehicle later that day. All of the group, except CGB, spent the latter part of the afternoon between Duvergé and Puerto Escondido. Overnight in Barahona.

22-Mar-99 Barahona south and west: La Mercedes (ALCOA road), Cabo Rojo, Laguna Oviedo, Barahona

Early morning start for the Las Mercedes road where we remained until nearly midday. Highlights included: Eastern Chat-tanager, Hispaniolan Palm Crow and a brief White-winged Crossbill. Lunch in Pedernales was followed by a visit to the Cabo Rojo area which produced a number of shorebirds and others. Returned to Barahona for the night, via Laguna Oviedo. A brief search for Ashy-faced Owl near Barahona was unsuccessful.

23-Mar-99 Barahona to Duvergé to El Aguacate to Zapotén to Duvergé



We go back to the tourist compound for a noon to three o'clock break. Since this is an all-inclusive resort, some of the group go to check out some of the available activities. There is snorkeling, kayaking, horse-back riding, wind-surfing, beach volleyball and a number of stores in which to spend your American dollars.

The afternoon is spent on Cayo Guillermo in search of Bahama Mockingbird, which is found relatively easily along the road. There is evidence of more development on Guillermo, which may make it more difficult for this bird in the future here. Another interesting find here is a leucistic Yellow-faced Grassquit, which is seen well and photographed. Rain cuts short our trip, but we have gotten all the targets and are not all that displeased in leaving the mosquitoes behind.

21 January 2001 Cayo Paredon Grande to La Habana

Upon further review of last night's checklist, it is decided that some of the group had, in fact, not seen the Thick-billed Vireo. A group vote is in favor of a return trip to Cayo Paredon Grande to give them another chance at the bird. Since we have seen all the target birds in this area, we essentially have the morning to use as we please before moving back toward the capital city. It takes a short time to locate the vireo and get "tickable" looks for everyone, and then we are on the road back to La Habana.

We make a mid-afternoon stop at Hato de Jicarita, a fish farm which attracts a great number of wading and marsh birds. No new birds are found, but it is a good break from the long ride. Birds found here are Cuban Trogon, Cuban Pewee, Belted Kingfisher, King Rail, all the egrets and herons, Limpkin, Purple Gallinule, American Coot, Common Moorhen, Pied-billed Grebe, Least Bittern and Black-crowned Night Heron.

22 January 2001

We have the morning for exploring La Guira National Park, about 2 hours west of La Habana. There are just a few more endemics to find, and Arturo sets out with a vengeance to accomplish this task. We start in a mixed pine forest, the nicest we've seen on the trip. We almost immediately bag the Cuban Solitaire and a flock of 20 Red-legged Honeycreepers in a side trail into the ravine. The Olive-capped Warbler, along with Scaly-naped Pigeon, Summer Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak, is up above in the pines. Another area with a stream-carved natural cave yields a better look at the solitaire, and provides wonderful acoustics for recording blackbirds. Arturo finally pulls a couple of Cuban Grassquits out of a group of Yellow-faced Grassquits flocking around some local farmsteads. That is our last endemic, and we spend the rest of the time birding the road down towards the park entrance, enjoying final views of many of the endemics. A roadside trail produces Swainson's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, White-eyed Vireo, Great Lizard-Cuckoo and Yellow-headed Warbler among a number of other migrants.

We leave the park at eleven in order to get back to town in time for our flights. We have time for one last stop at the intersection of the road to the park and the main highway, where there is a small introduced population of Chestnut Mannikin in the fields in that area. We arrive at the airport in La Habana just before one. Half of the group is continuing on to Jamaica for a 5-day endemic trip.

We travel via the coast road, and by 11:00 have reached the town of Trinidad, where arrangements are made for lunch. We then travel just outside town to the Rio Caña area, where thermals can be good for raptors. Turkey Vultures abound, but no other birds of prey. Highlights here include Spotted Sandpiper, Cinnamon-throated Swallow, Magificent Frigatebird, and Least Grebe.

The rest of the afternoon is spent in travel from Trinidad to Camagüey. We are staying at the Gran Hotel, where the dinner buffet is even more lavish than our previous ones.

19 January 2001 La Belen National Park to Cayo Coco

We have an early start to arrive at the La Belen area by dawn. Our first stop is at Najasa, a palm swamp where we find a mixed group of Cuban and Cuban Palm Crows and Plain Pigeon. We spend the rest of the morning in the National Park proper, walking trails through various habitats, led by the park warden. We tick off a big list of birds here, many repeats of the previous days, and quite a few North American migrants. Of the endemics, we add Giant Kingbird (extensive close-up study and audio recordings), Cuban Meadowlark (a potential split from Eastern Meadowlark), West-Indian Whistling Duck (distant poor looks of a family group swimming away into the reeds), and Gundllach's Hawk (great views of a pair responding to tape). Other new trip birds are Caspian Tern, Indigo Bunting, Barn Owl and Helmeted Guineafowl. A search for Cuban Grassquit comes up empty.

We drive back to the hotel in Camagüey for lunch, then get on the road to Cayo Coco, on the north-eastern shore of the island. The trip takes most of the afternoon. We arrive at the long causeway to the island with about an hour's birding time left, and use that for a few stops along the way. Among the birds tallied are Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Brown Pelican, Laughing Gull, American Flamingo, Reddish Egret, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-necked Stilt, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, both Cormorants, Least Sandpiper and Grey Plover.

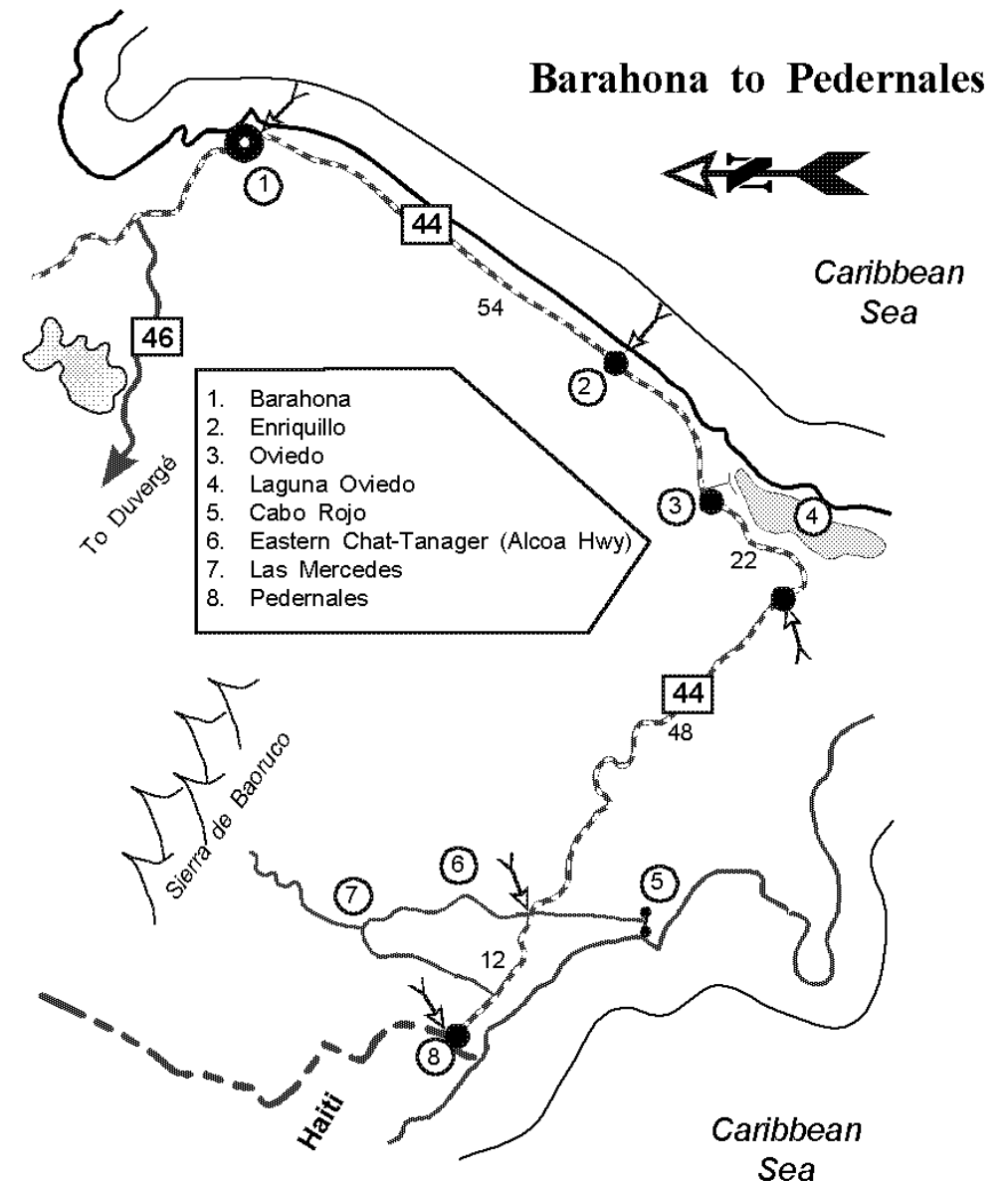
We arrive at the Hotel Tryp at dusk and are treated to our first of many insecticide sprays to keep the mosquitoes at bay, a foreboding of things to come. We are also treated to the dinner buffet, a decadent array of Cuban cuisine. Here it is painfully obvious that all the tourist areas have a high standard for food and services which is quite different than is available for the general population.

20 January 2001 Cayo Coco, Cayo Paredon Grande

After breakfast, we leave for Cayo Paredon Grande. Our first stop is at a roadside trail on Cayo Paredon Grande, where those who had not seen Zapata Sparrow were finally able to get good looks. Oriente Warbler is found, along with a mixed flock of North American migrants. Most notable of these is a Chestnut-sided Warbler, a first record for Cuba. Others include Yellow-throated Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Palm, Prairie, Northern Parula, and Black-throated Blue Warblers.

En route to Cayo Paredon Grande, we add Wood Stork, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Cuban Black-Hawk, White Ibis and Crested Caracara.

At Cayo Paredon Grande, we slather on as much pure DEET as we could find (doesn't make any difference), and head out into the scrub, hoping to find Cuban Gnatcatcher and Thick-billed Vireo. A number of each is heard, but seeing them proves to be a bit more difficult. Eventually, everyone is able to get on both birds. Another bird heard but not seen is Mangrove Cuckoo. Yellow Warbler also makes its first appearance. A long walk out to the bay only serves to leave most of us a pint low on blood, with no new birds for the effort.



The entire day was spent between Puerto Escondido and Zapotén. Although we only heard La Selle Thrush and Hispaniolan Nightjar, the highlights were many: Bay-breasted Cuckoo, Hispaniolan Parakeet, Olive-throated Parakeet, Flat-billed Vireo, Rufous-throated Solitaire, White-winged Warbler and Western Chat-tanager. We also heard Key West Quail-dove. Overnight in Duvergé.

24-Mar-99 Duvergé to Puerto Escondido to Laguna del Rincón to Barahona to Santo Domingo

An early morning start for the area above Puerto Escondido failed to produce the hoped-for Least Poorwill. We birded this area until mid-morning before returning to Santo Domingo via Laguna del Rincón. Overnight in Santo Domingo.

March Cuba

25-Mar-99 La Habana to La Guamá

All of the group, except Louise Augustine who returned to the USA, took a COPA flight to La Habana via Panama City, arriving just after midday. Lunch in La Habana, where we met up with the rest of the group: Gary and Joel Abramson, David Beadle, Walter Hughs and Steve Whitehouse. Afternoon drive to Boca La Guamá where we stayed overnight. A brief check of the Palpité area failed to produce Chuck-will's Widow but did provide a Cuban Nightjar.

26-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula: Peralta to Palpité to Turba

Early departure from La Guamá for the Peralta area of Zapata swamp, which produced a near-flood of endemics including Zapata Wren, Cuban Pygmy-owl and Fernandina's Flicker. Unfortunately the area appeared too dry for Zapata Rail on this occasion. Following lunch at Boca, we proceeded to Palpité, where most people saw Gray-headed Quail-dove, and then Turba, which produced superb views of Zapata Sparrow and Yellow-breasted Crake (a life bird for Arturo), King Rail and Cuban Red-shouldered Blackbird, and heard only Spotted and Zapata Rails. Overnight at La Guamá.

27-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula: La Guamá to Meja to La Ceiba to Cuera de los Peces

The entire day was spent in the Mera, La Ceiba and Cueva de los Peces areas. Highlights

16 January 2001 Peralta, Turba, Playa Larga, Cueva de los Peces

We leave the compound early to arrive at the swamp in Peralta just after dawn. This location is on the north side of the Zapata swamplands. A 2 kilometer hike gets us to the main part of the swamp, where the Zapata Rail and Wren are to be found. Arturo spots a rail crossing the trail ahead of the group and we spend a few hours in the area trying to spot one. It ends up as only a heard bird for most of the group. A couple get quick glimpses of one responding to tape. The wren proves much easier, responding to Arturo's tape by walking across his toes! Other birds of note were a Fernandina's Flicker (heard), Red-shouldered Blackbird (pair in flight), Cinnamon-throated Swallow, and a Zapata Sparrow glimpsed by a few.

As the day begins to heat up, we returned toward Playa Giron, with a few stops targeting Fernandina's Flicker and Red-shouldered Blackbird. At Turba a very responsive flicker finally allows excellent views for the entire group. At another location we are stymied by lack of suitable habitat for the blackbird due to a recent dry spell. A large group of Cuban Crows resident in Playa Larga on the Bahia de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs) provides a good ending to the morning.

We regroup after lunch and siesta for a return to the Cueva de los Peces, determined to wait out the Blue-headed Quail Dove (while drinking beer under the veranda). We stay until about an hour until dark, but it fails to make an appearance. However, a few in the group find Ruddy Quail Dove, a new bird for the trip.

The last stop of the day is at a trail in Punta Perdiz, where Key West Quail Dove is a little more cooperative and is seen by all. The Stygian Owl is at his usual spot in the tree at Playa Giron as we head to dinner.

17 January 2001

We repeat yesterday's trip to Peralta to make a second attempt at the rail and others. Things are much quieter this morning, and although we hear the rail, no one glimpses the bird, but a few are able to get better looks at Zapata Sparrow, and a melanistic Green Heron is a unique find. Ray, who has stayed back at the open field before the marsh, makes another good find, a Great Crested Flycatcher, the only one of the trip.

The afternoon is spent on Laguna del Tesoro, the site of a historic re-creation of the Taino Indian Village at La Guamá. Our main target is Red-shouldered Blackbird, which only a few have managed glimpses of yet, but any ducks or marsh birds would be welcome. Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal and Ring-necked Duck are the only new additions to the list. On the way back to Playa Giron, we stopped at the fish farm at Turba, still hoping for Red-shouldered Blackbird, but with no success.

This is the last night at Playa Giron, and the fourth in a row for the Stygian Owl.

18 January 2001 Playa Giron to Camagüey

We leave Playa Giron for the trip to Camagüey right after breakfast. A stop at a roadside marsh yields Snail Kite, Great Lizard Cuckoo, Cuban Green Woodpecker, White-crowned Pigeon, Merlin, Cuban Peewee, Wood Duck, Northern Jacana, Greater Yellowlegs, and the full complement of egrets and herons.

14 January 2001 Havana to Boca La Guamá, Cueva de los Peces, Playa Giron

We depart at 9:30 from the Hotel Neptuno in Miramar, pick up Arturo Kirkconnell along the way, and arrive at Boca la Guamá at noon for lunch. Several of the more widespread endemics are present on the grounds and seen well by the group. Among them are Cuban Blackbird, West Indian Woodpecker, Crescent-eyed (Cuban) Pewee and Tawny-shouldered Blackbird. Noteworthy is a Bee Hummingbird feeding low in trees at the edge of the parking lot, providing all with splendid looks.

We spend an hour at Cueva de los Peces and tick off Bare-legged Owl (roosting in a tree cavity by the cenote) and more common species such as Cuban Bullfinch, Great-Lizard Cuckoo, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Cuban Tody and Cuban Vireo. A number of North American migrants were also present, including Cape May Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Black-throated Green Warbler. Other than the owl, the target birds here are and of the four species of Quail-Doves, but we do not find any of them.

The rest of the afternoon is spent at various stops in the area, targeting Fernandina's Flicker. We are not able to locate this endemic, but satisfy ourselves with Yellow-headed Warbler, Cuban Parakeet and Rose-throated (Cuban) Parrot during the course of the search. As nightfall approaches, we settle into an area of dry scrub and listen for night birds. Cuban Pygmy Owl and Greater Antillean Nightjar begin singing just after dark, but neither is co-operative enough for us to get a light on it. However, on the way to our lodging at Playa Giron, Arturo spots another nightjar on the road and we are able to get on it before the only other vehicle for miles comes down the road towards us and causes it to flush.

Lodging for the next four days is at Playa Giron. Before dinner, a Stygian Owl is located at a hunting perch on a tree by the pool. The dinner buffet has more than enough options to satisfy everyone. Those emergency granola bars will end up being carried around for nothing.

15 February 2001 Los Sabalos, La Mera, Cueva de los Peces

The morning is spent at Los Sabalos, where highlights are numerous Cuban Trogons, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Gray-headed Quail Dove, Cuban Emerald, Stripe-headed Tanager, Red-legged Thrush, Swainson's Warbler, Ovenbird, and Cape May Warbler.

Lunch back at Playa Giron is disrupted by the sighting of a Chuck-Wills-Widow near the pool. The ensuing attempt to relocate and photograph it causes a bit of a interest among some of the other German patrons at the pool and we lend them binoculars so that they can see the bird, too.

In the afternoon, we return to Cueva de los Peces to check for Blue-headed Quail Dove, but are again unsuccessful. We end the day at Finca Esperansa in La Mera, plodding through a cattle pasture for another try at finding Fernandina's flicker. Still no luck, but we get a chance for better looks at a number of endemics that were not seen well before.

included further looks at Fernandina's Flicker, Cuban Parakeet, Bare-legged Owl, superlative views of five Blue-headed Quail-doves, and a Key West Quail-dove for two members of the group. Overnight at La Guamá.

28-Mar-99 Zapata Peninsula: Los Sabalos to Cueva de los Peces

All day spent in the Los Sabalos, Palpité and Cueva de los Peces areas. Highlights included five Bee Hummingbirds, five more Blue-headed Quail-doves, Arturo and my best-ever looks at Gundlach's Hawk, excellent views for some of Gray-headed Quail-dove and a host of commoner endemics. Overnight at La Guamá.

29-Mar-99 La Guamá to Camagüey

The day was spent driving from La Guama to Camagüey, where we stayed in the Hotel Gran.

30-Mar-99 Camagüey to Najasa to La Belén to Cayo Guillermo

Early morning start for the Najasa and La Belén areas. We soon found Cuban Palm Crow at a regular site and then, with the help of Pedro Regalado, went on to find four Giant Kingbirds, Plain Pigeon, Cuban Grassquit and the local form of Eastern Meadowlark, which is apparently vocally distinct from other populations and may warrant specific status. A study, using mt-DNA techniques, into the taxonomic status of this form is on-going. Afternoon drive to Cayo Guillermo where we quickly found Bahama Mockingbird. Overnight on Cayo Guillermo.

31-Mar-99 Cayo Coco to Cayo Romano to Cayo Paredón-Grande

We spent the entire day exploring the neighbouring islands of Cayo Coco and Cayo Paredón-Grande, finding all of the expected species including Crab Hawk, Thick-billed Vireo, Cuban Gnatcatcher, Zapata Sparrow and Oriente Warbler. Overnight on Cayo

Guillermo.

01-Apr-99 Cayo Guillermo to La Habana

All day drive to La Habana, arriving early evening.

02-Apr-99 La Güira National Park

Early morning start for Parque Nacional La Güira, where we found all of the hoped-for species: Cuban Solitaire, Olive-capped Warbler and Stygian Owl (which we had missed at Playa Larga). We also heard a Blue-headed Quail-dove. Return to La Habana where KC, RS, SM, CR and PJ returned to Santo Domingo mid-afternoon. DB returned to Toronto early evening.

03-Apr-99 Departures

G & JA and WH returned to Florida, via Nassau, early morning, and GMK, CGB and MAE to Houston, via Cancún, mid-afternoon. SMW remained in Cuba until 7 April.



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The Daily Checklist

fc = **Fairly common**
h = **heard only**
x = **quantities undetermined**
sp = **identity uncertain**
s = **seen**

...”Bird name” denotes a potential future split