

WildWings Trip Report – The Best of the Islands

By Peter and Rosemary Royle

Trinidad and Tobago 1st – 17th December 2016

INTRODUCTION

This trip report consists of notes on a birding trip to Trinidad and Tobago carried out by myself (Rosemary Royle) and my husband Peter. It is not a blow-by-blow account of every place visited and every bird seen. Instead, the birding locations are briefly described (with especial reference to recent changes) and the bird list provides details of where birds were seen.

We decided to visit Trinidad & Tobago as we thought it would provide a nice break before Christmas in a warm climate and there was the potential for up to 50 lifers. There were also a few charismatic birds I really wanted to see – these were Oilbird, Scarlet Ibis and Tufted Coquette (especially as my brother, who is not even really a birdwatcher, had seen them a few years earlier!)

When planning the trip it soon became clear that Trinidad is quite a large island, with a mixture of different habitats which produces quite a large bird list. However it shares much of its avifauna with Central and North America and we had therefore seen many of the species before, on various trips to these areas. Tobago is much smaller with fewer habitats and a much smaller list but a couple of key birds which are difficult to see elsewhere and a few species much more easily seen here than in Trinidad. We therefore decided to split our time so that we spent much more time on Trinidad than on Tobago. In the event, the 10 days on Trinidad and 4 on Tobago was just right.

In the field we used “Birds of Trinidad and Tobago” by Kenefick, Restall and Hayes. We had the first edition which is pretty out of date now. The second edition was published in 2009 and the third edition (according to Martin Kenefick on the veranda at Asa Wright) is imminent (he has to get the CD to the publishers by the end of the year!).

We also used “A birdwatching guide to Trinidad and Tobago” by Murphy. The site guide is rather out of date but the information at the back of the book, especially the tables showing abundance and presence of each species, were very useful.

We booked the trip through Wildwings, who provide several birding packages and tailored itineraries on Trinidad and Tobago. We booked a standard “tailor made trip” consisting of a 7-night birding package at Pax Guesthouse, 3 nights at Asa Wright and 4 nights at Blue Waters Inn on Tobago. This all worked out very well. All the flights, transfers, guiding at Pax and the internal flight from Trinidad to Tobago were included as were all the meals on Trinidad. The cost was £6288 for the two of us. We spent about another £500 on meals at Blue Waters, guiding on Tobago, car hire for a day on Tobago and a guided trip to the Blanchisseuse Rd from Asa Wright.

The combination of Pax and Asa Wright worked well - there are forest birds you can only see at Asa Wright or on the Blanchisseuse Rd (on which Asa Wright is situated). Equally there are open country/scrub birds at Pax which cannot be seen at Asa Wright. There is also a large swathe of birds which can only be seen on the standard excursions, which can be organised from Asa Wright or from Pax.

Excursions from Pax involved a drive through the centre of Tunapuna, which could be very congested, and then often a drive along the main E-W road. This was very busy and traffic light changes very slow.

Excursions from Asa Wright involved a slow drive downhill to Arima and then often a shorter bash along the E-W road though if you were going to the W coast or Caroni it would be longer. We decided it did not make much difference where you were based as far as excursions were concerned. The most economical way to organise the birding excursions is via the Pax Birding Package or by a direct arrangement with a local guide. One possible benefit of doing excursions from Asa Wright is that they currently have access to sites not available to others e.g. Waller Field, though on the downside, you may well have to share the excursion with quite a few other birders who may all be in an organised group together.

We chose the dates above because we wanted to go before Christmas during the “off season”, and just after the rains are supposed to have stopped. In practice, the rains hadn't really stopped but it was certainly true that everywhere was quiet with just a few guests. The busy/expensive season apparently started on Dec 16th, the day we left!

Pax Guesthouse Birding Package

The Birding Package at Pax Guesthouse consisted of 6 days in the field with a birding guide. Visits are made each day to the well-known birding sites in Trinidad. However, the descriptions of the excursions as outlined on the Wildwings website are out of date. (This particularly refers to sites which can no longer be accessed)

Our guide was called Kenny (we asked his surname but we can't remember it and he said that everyone just knows him as Kenny which indeed they did) He was a very large man and drove us around in a lilac Datsun Sunny with a skeleton dangling from the windscreen. Notwithstanding this, he was a very knowledgeable bird guide. He knew all the good places and the bird calls and had a very sharp eye. He was also personable and easy to talk to. In fact you could not ask

more of a bird guide. However, he also runs, with his wife, a licensed mini-mart in Arima which consumes a lot of his time, creates a lot of problems and generates a lot of telephone calls. Because of this he is seriously considering whether he can carry on doing the bird guiding for Pax. He was really burning the candle at both ends during the time we were there though he did his best to make sure this did not impact our birding. (Note that Kenny also has a minibus but it was in the garage at the time we were there, hence the Datsun Sunny which was, in fact, perfectly comfortable though not suitable for some of roads we could potentially have attempted)

The accommodation at Pax was old fashioned but full of character. Our room was en suite and had air con. and a fan – everything worked just fine. The food was excellent and the owners, Gerard and Oda, were extremely welcoming. The staff were very helpful and pleasant.

Asa Wright

We had 3 days at Asa Wright which means we were entitled to an Oilbird visit and an Orientation Walk. In the event we did not get the latter as we booked an excursion to the Blanchisseuse Rd on the only available date.

Finding out about these things at Reception (e.g which day was our Oilbird visit - they are only run about twice per week) was like getting blood out of a stone – they offered no information voluntarily and seemed to expect you to read the folder in the room rather than give you basic information when you check in. A Welsh birder staying there on a Motmot Travel package at the same time did not know that you are not supposed to use bird recordings at Asa Wright – nobody had told him – this was an obvious thing to cover at check-in time.

We felt that Asa Wright is really geared up for hosting groups which either have their own guide or who have a dedicated Asa Wright guide and did not seem geared up to offer advice or planning help to independent travellers.

We spent most of our time here either on the veranda or walking the trails apart from the day trip to the Blanchisseuse Road.

The accommodation here was fine, but we had a stiff walk up the hill to our cabin (outside which were Vervain flowers hosting Tufted Coquettes). The food was not as good as Pax and often cold, though perfectly edible. The domestic staff were taciturn and unhelpful, but the naturalist guides on the veranda were usually good, pro-active and helpful.

One odd thing about Asa Wright is their insistence on providing a hot lunch in the field. This means you must have a picnic table to put it on which generally means that you must have lunch in a spot which is not very good for birding.

The “famous” Asa Wright cocktails seem to have gone downhill – instead of the expected unlimited supplies of alcoholic punch, we were given a glass of excessively sweet pink stuff with barely detectable rum!

Tobago - Bluewaters Inn

We found that there was reasonably birding in the grounds – good views of Motmots for example. Starwood Trace above the hotel was also good.

The accommodation was fine though the room servicing was not up to scratch.

The food was good but the evening menu was very expensive. The lunchtime menu was much better value and in some ways more interesting. Without a car it is not really possible to eat out as Speyside is a good mile away, up and down a lot of hill that you probably would not want to walk at night (though I expect taxis are available)

We hired a car for one day while we were here – it was amazingly easy to do, all organised by reception. It only cost US\$60 and driving was easy.

We had booked a full morning tour to the Gilpin Trace area and an afternoon tour of Little Tobago with Newton George by email before we left. Newton was obviously a very experienced guide but he seemed keen to satisfy everyone (or maximise his profits) and get as many people as possible on his outings. We thought we had booked a private trip but apparently not – 4 more people turned up and they were not birdwatchers. He seems to charge the same per person however many people are in the group. In the event he did an amazing job of keeping the non-bird-watchers happy with jacamars and motmots and us happy with spinetails and antwrens so we did actually see most of our key species. He then took us to his home to see Ruby-topaz Hummingbird so we can't really complain. The tour cost \$US65 per person.

Itinerary

Our days were spent as follows:

1 – Fly to Trinidad with BA from Gatwick

1 – around Pax guesthouse and the road up the hill

2 - Aripo Research Station entrance road and Nariva Swamp/East coast 3 –
Arena forest am then Waller Field pm

4 – The Wildlife Trust then the Waterloo Bay area, Caroni Swamp pm

5 – Heavy rain in early morning and low cloud so cancelled Blanchisseuse Rd and went back to Caroni to birdwatch from the land then to the Caroni rice-fields then back to Pax for the afternoon.

6 – Very early start for Grande Riviere and the Trinidad Piping Guan. Pax in the afternoon. 7 –

Transfer to Asa Wright. At Asa Wright in afternoon on balcony and trails.

8 – Blanchisseuse Rd with Asa Wright guide.

9 – Oilbird visit at Asa Wright then on the veranda and trails in the afternoon.

10 – morning flight to Tobago and transfer to Bluewaters Inn. Afternoon around Bluewaters and along Starwood Trace.

11 – Starwood Trace in the morning, Little Tobago pm

12 – Morning on Roxburgh/Bloody Bay Rd and Gilpin Trace with Newton George.

12 – Hired a car and explored the E end of Tobago. In pm went back to Gilpin Trace to explore on our own. In evening drove to Flagstaff Hill.

13 – Morning at Bluewaters then fly to Gatwick from Tobago

BIRDING LOCATIONS – TRINIDAD

(Many of these locations are well described in Murphy or in various trip reports so they are not covered in detail)

Pax Guesthouse, the road up the hill and the Donkey Trail

We spent quite a lot of time at Pax Guesthouse birding from the three balconies. This was very productive for hummingbirds and honeycreepers and we also saw doves, thrushes, parrots, birds of prey and a Bat Falcon. The lower balcony is the best for hummingbirds, but for some reason the feeders are positioned even lower down so you have to peer over the edge or through the wire barrier to see the feeders.

The road up to the top of the hill does not look particularly promising – it has hairpin bends and between the hairpins are areas of scrub, tall grass, a few trees, and, at the W end of the hairpins, good forest. However, we notched up 55 species here on our first morning with Kenny and on subsequent excursions on our own (most mornings before breakfast and sometimes the afternoon) we found about another 10 species. In fact, each time we walked it we found a new flycatcher! The view overlooking the forest on the ridge to the E was very good for raptors.

The Donkey Trail is more enclosed and less easy to bird but can apparently be good in the early morning. We never walked far along the tracks but I believe you can still walk to the top of the hill.

It was good to be able to walk around on our own at Pax – the road and Donkey Trail are considered to be safe, located as they are right next to a monastery!

Aripo Research Station

We went to Aripo Research Station but were not allowed in - apparently this happens from time to time but it is possible that this is a permanent change. We birded the entrance road and managed to find a Red-breasted Blackbird, Savannah Hawk, White-winged Swallows etc. but Aripo is/was a classic site for several seedeaters and other short grass birds and there seemed to be no alternative locations for these birds.

It is also a standard spot for night birding – again, there seemed to be no secure alternative.

Nariva Swamp

A long but productive day. We visited the Western area to try and find the re-introduced Blue-and-Yellow Macaws – unsuccessfully, but there were several good bits of habitat on the way. Then to the Manzanilla area and southwards past the famous miles of coconut palms. A stop by some mangroves was very productive with Silvered Antbird and Bi-coloured Conebill. Then on to Kernahan Trace where we had excellent views of Long-winged Harrier. Unfortunately the grass/reeds were a bit long for bitterns. Then through various swampy areas and lastly to the macaw roosting site (the last part of the track was very muddy and potholed so we had to walk). The parrot roosting site was full of Orange-winged and Yellow-crowned Parrots and our only Common Ground-dove but alas no Red-bellied Macaws.

Arena Forest

Our best birding here was right on the edge of the forest by the last little building before the forest proper. We saw Trinidad Euphonia (it was calling – a very distinctive sound) and Striped Cuckoo here. The forest was quite quiet as very few birds were singing yet but I suspect it can be very good. We did manage to see Long-billed Gnatwren and some woodcreepers and woodpeckers.

Waller Field

This area is now a Tech Park, fenced and with a security entrance. We could only get in by pretending to be from Asa Wright, as Asa Wright have obviously set up some kind of agreement with the site owners. And we

had to be out by 6:00 pm so no night birding was possible. We had terrific views of the Red-bellied Macaws here, also Sulphury Flycatcher. We waited for the Moriche Oriole to call but had to leave for the 6:00pm deadline – Asa Wright clients saw it here at dusk a few days later.

The Wildlife Trust

Right down in the SW of the island this place was worth visiting. We had our best views of Yellow-hooded Blackbird here and very close views of Masked Cardinal, Green Kingfisher and Limpkin.

The Waterloo Bay area

Carli Bay, Waterloo causeway, the Floating Temple and Brickfields – all these areas were productive, especially the Waterloo causeway for waders, and Brickfields for the gull/tern roost (you had to walk out a little way on to a muddy promontory to see the small offshore island containing the roosting gull, terns and skimmers). It is important to visit this area when the tide is low-ish – say lower than half tide.

Caroni Swamp

We managed to get on to a boat with Asa Wright clients, so we were with other birdwatchers. This is important if you want to have a bird-spotting boat driver who will find other key mangrove birds (Green-throated Mango, Bi-coloured Conebill, Straight-billed Woodcreeper) as well as watch the Ibis roost. It is worth noting that on our last day the weather in the evening was awful, so do not leave this trip to the last day as many people do!

It is also worth birdwatching from the tarmac road which runs alongside the drain. We saw Rufous-necked Wood-rail in the mangroves here and had excellent view of Black-crested Antshrike which Kenny called in. We also had better views of the roosting Tropical Screech Owl than we had from the boat.

Caroni Rice-fields

We could not access all of this area as the roads were very potholed and muddy and we did not have a 4WD. The areas which we did visit were strangely quiet – there were attractive-looking wet fields with flowery and weedy edges but almost no birds. There were no insects either, except dragonflies, so I did wonder if pesticide use was the problem. Apparently the fields can be chock-a-block with passage waders but maybe we were a bit late for that.

Grande Riviere for the Trinidad Piping-guan

It is a long drive round to Grande Riviere – we left Pax at 3:15 in order to be at the viewing area at 6:30. Kenny took us as far as Valencia where we were picked up by Nicholas who is the local guide who takes people to view the Guans. We negotiated the roads in the NE which had been completely blocked by landslips until a few days previously and eventually arrived at the viewing area, which has been set up opposite a small guesthouse. We saw the birds extremely well and had good views of toucans etc as well. There were plenty of other good birds there but we had already seen most of them, though it was our only site for Black-tailed Tityra.

Asa Wright

The Asa Wright veranda is world-famous, though we did not see as many varieties of hummers here as we did at Pax. It was always entertaining – at dusk and first light the bats come down to eat the bananas, and there are Agoutis and Tegu lizards in addition to the birds. Our only view of a Bellbird was through a scope on the veranda and birds of prey were visible in the distance.

The main trail at Asa Wright is the Discovery trail which leads straight down along a ridge from the main building. I guess this can get quite busy but there were not many guests when we were there. Most things could be seen from this trail. Many of the other trails were not maintained – they were covered with leaves and debris and also not productive of birds. We also tried the main drive several times but saw very little – the foliage along the edge had recently been hacked down which may have contributed to this. When returning slowly from the Oilbird visit, we found a few nice birds on this trail.

We probably would have benefited from some help from Asa Wright guides on the trails but we were determined to do it ourselves!

The Vervain flowers by the main car park were out during our stay and the Tufted Coquettes could usually be found here.

Blanchisseuse Road

We were due to visit this road with Kenny but the day dawned to very poor weather and the cloud was down over the Northern Range. We therefore cancelled it and decided we would do the road a few days later as a standard trip from Asa Wright, which we did and for which we paid US\$80 per head. So several days later, we set out from Asa Wright with our guide, Rudal, and one other experienced birder and a shopping list of birds (mostly rather hard!). The birding seemed very slow indeed – there was very little calling – but we did eventually find a few good birds including Blue-headed Parrot, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Speckled Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager and Golden-headed Manakin. (Other birders also reported very slow birding on this particular day in a completely different habitat though there was no apparent reason for it.)

Trincity Sewage Ponds

Apparently access is no longer allowed. I think you can still peer through the fence.

BIRDING LOCATIONS - TOBAGO

Roxburgh/Bloody Bay Road and Gilpin Trace (the mountain road)

We birded this road with Newton George and then in our hire car. Newton made several good stops on the road and we had views of jacamars, motmots, trogons etc plus some of the key birds on our shopping list such as White-fringed Antwren, Olivaceous Woodcreeper and Venezuelen Flycatcher. We then walked along Gilpin Trace where we had good views of most of our target forest birds such as White-tailed Sabrewing and Striped-breasted Spinetail. We went back to Gilpin Trace the next day on our own in the afternoon to find the Yellow-legged Thrush, which we succeeded in doing.

Bluewaters Inn and area

The lawned area with big trees was good for Motmots, Red-crowned Woodpecker and flycatchers. The track which runs around the hillside above Bluewaters (Starwood Trace) provided quite good birding – jacamars, antshrikes, greenlets and flycatchers. Apparently White-fringed Antwren is there though we did not see it.

Little Tobago

We did this trip with Newton George but it does not really need an expensive guide – I should think the local guides could do it just as well. It is quite a short walk up to the viewpoint – about 30 minutes. The sea was quite rough when we went across and the crossing takes about 20 minutes.

Flagstaff Hill

This is a turning off the road from Bluewaters to Charlotteville about 10 minutes by car from Bluewaters. We walked it during the day and found flycatchers and huge numbers of Orange-winged Parrots. There are good views from the top. At dusk we found at least 6 White-tailed Nightjars, and we could hear more calling.

Newton George's garden

In Speyside, it can be visited at any time, though it is not that easy to access. A good spot for Ruby-topaz Hummingbird and occasionally Brown Violet-ear. "Junior", one of the guides working from Bluewaters Inn, also has a garden which is good for hummingbirds.

BIRDING

General comments

The lack of access to Aripo, Trincity Sewage Ponds and restricted access to Waller field meant that we missed a few birds, for which alternative locations did not seem to be available.

Our guides thought the weather was affecting the birds - the late rainy season seemed to mean that the birds had not started to breed, so they were not calling or singing much. This made the birding harder.

One strange phenomenon was that breakfast at Pax and Asa Wright was not served till 7:30 though it started getting light at about 6:00. Birders who are used to being out in the field at first light could get frustrated. But in fact it worked out OK – you could bird the immediate area before breakfast then start your birding with a guide at the strangely late hour of 8:30. In practice this worked out fine. The birds in the forest were very slow to get started – they needed sunshine to get going, and other birds seemed to be active most of the day with little evidence of a midday slump in activity.

Our overall total was 198 species with 46 lifers which we were very happy with. We could probably have added at least ten to this list if we had spent more time identifying birds of prey and looking for waterbirds and seabirds as list padding fodder.

Birds we were particularly pleased to see:

Trinidad Piping-guan – we made a 3:15 am start to see this bird and it was worth it. There were about 5 birds sitting in the top of the trees chilling out and preening after feeding before dawn. Apparently a sighting is almost guaranteed by Nicholas, who is the local guide at Grande Riviere.

Red-footed Booby – at last, after missing this bird in several countries

Scarlet Ibis – not only at the roost but poking around on the beach with the waders at Waterloo – a stunning sight.

Long-winged Harrier – a very elegant and impressive bird.

Rufous-necked Wood-rail – apparently quite rare

White-tailed Nightjar – lack of access to night-birding sites in Trinidad had frustrated us so we were pleased to find at least 6 birds on the road up to Flagstaff Hill on Tobago at dusk in our hire car.

Ruby-topaz Hummingbird – absent from Trinidad but just returning as we got to Tobago (and apparently always easier there). Newton George took us to his garden to see them.

Tufted Coquette – reliable on the Vervain flowers outside our cabin (the highest one) at Asa Wright.

Red-bellied Macaw – splendid views of perched birds eating palm nuts at Waller Field after failing at Nariva Swamp.

Yellow-legged Thrush – we found a family party bathing in the stream at Gilpin Trace in the afternoon, about 3:00pm.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater – a small colony by the road above Pax Guesthouse was a surprise. They were hard to see but singing so you could eventually pick them up.

Birds we missed

There were a few key birds we missed – these were:

Pinnated Bittern – at the end of the rainy season the grass and reeds at Nariva were mostly very tall and too tall to see bitterns. We did not get a chance to look for them in Aripo.

Rufous-Crab-hawk – no sign of it

Mangrove/Clapper Rail – we did actually see the back end of one in the mangroves at Nariva but not a tickable view. The pair of rails we saw at Caroni from the track turned out to be the rarer Rufous-necked Wood-rail.

Mottled Owl/Striped Owl – our night-birding was much curtailed and the guides do not seem to have roosting birds staked out.

Chestnut Collared/Chapman's/Band-rumped/Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts – we saw Grey-rumped, Short-tailed and Fork-tailed Palm Swifts but there was no sign of the others. Time of year?

Chestnut Woodpecker – Our guide tried hard for this on the Blanchisseuse Rd but to no avail

Grey-throated Leaf-tosser – no sign of this or info on its whereabouts at Asa Wright.

Olive-striped Flycatcher and Short-tailed Pygmy Tyrant – we missed these birds (I think they are quite difficult) and the other flycatchers were hard to find – they were not calling or making themselves conspicuous. Many flycatchers we only saw once.

Caribbean Martin – we always knew that this bird would be absent during our visit

Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush – apparently extremely difficult

Masked Yellowthroat – our restricted access to wetland sites probably reduced our chances here

Grassland Yellow Finch/Ruddy-breasted Seedeater/Sooty Grassquit – our only chance would have been Aripo.

Other animals

We managed to see a Red Howler Monkey at Nariva and there were plentiful lizards and geckos everywhere. Also large iguanas at Pax and Tegu lizards at Asa Wright. Of the (something like) 165 species of bat on Trinidad we saw at least 3 different sorts on the feeders at Asa Wright and the day-flying Sac-winged Bat was common.

We saw several species of snake – tree boas over our heads in the Caroni Swamp, a small anaconda crossing the road in the Caroni rice fields and a Fer de Lance crossed the path at the top of the steps down to the Oilbird caves between myself and guy in front – it moved very fast at first then stopped, giving us all good views. It was not fully grown but they can apparently be very dangerous as soon as they are born!

Agoutis were common and cute and Red-tailed Squirrels were seen in the forests. There were plenty of butterflies on the wing – we saw many different species and identified none except for The Postman!

Spiders – Newton George showed us Trap-door Spider trapdoors on Gilpin Trace, also a huge Scorpion Whip-spider (about 9 inches across its longest legs) both of which were fascinating.

BIRD LIST

Name	Trin	Tob	Notes
Little Tinamou	H		Heard several times in forest
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	X		Numerous at The Wildlife Trust, also seen at Nariva

Blue-winged Teal	X		2 flyover birds at Caroni Swamp
Rufous-vented Chachalaca		X	A small resident group at Bluewaters and on Little Tobago
Trinidad Piping-Guan	X		5 birds at the viewing point near Grande Riviere
Red-billed Tropicbird		X	Little Tobago
Magnificent Frigatebird	X	X	Very common on the coasts of Tobago, also on Trinidad
Brown Booby		X	Little Tobago
Red-footed Booby		X	Little Tobago
Anhinga	X		The Wildlife Trust
Brown Pelican	X	X	Numerous on Tobago, also on Trinidad
Great Blue Heron	X		One or two at Waterloo Bay
Great Egret	X		One or two at Waterloo Bay
Snowy Egret	X		A few at Waterloo Bay, roosting at Caroni Swamp
Little Blue Heron	X		Numerous at Waterloo Bay and Caroni Swamp
Tricolored Heron	X		At Waterloo Bay and Caroni Swamp
Cattle Egret	X	X	Small numbers with cattle or goats
Striated Heron	X		Nariva, Wildlife Trust and Caroni
Scarlet Ibis	X		Feeding on the beach at Waterloo Bay and of course at Caroni Swamp
Black Vulture	X		Common on Trinidad, huge numbers roosting at Waller Field
Turkey Vulture	X		Common Trinidad
Osprey	X	X	Waterloo Bay and Little Tobago
Pearl Kite	X		Perched on a dead tree in a village near Nariva Swamp
Ornate Hawk-Eagle	H		Heard calling on the Blanchisseuse Rd, as it soared, out of sight, overhead
Long-winged Harrier	X		Fabulous views at Nariva Swamp
Common Black Hawk	X		Seen soaring from the Pax road and Asa Wright
Savanna Hawk	X		Excellent views on the approach road to Aripo Research Station
White Hawk	X		Seen soaring from the Pax road and Asa Wright
Gray-lined Hawk	X		Seen a number of times both soaring and flying in a number of locations
Broad-winged Hawk	X	X	Seen soaring from the Pax road and Asa Wright
Short-tailed Hawk	X		Only seen once
Zone-tailed Hawk	X		Seen well from the Pax road and elsewhere
Rufous-necked Wood-Rail	X		A pair in the mangroves next to the tarmac track at Caroni Swamp
Purple Gallinule	X		Nariva Swamp, The Wildlife Trust
Common Gallinule	X		Nariva Swamp, The Wildlife Trust
Limpkin	X		Nariva Swamp, The Wildlife Trust
Black-necked Stilt	X		Waterloo Bay
Black-bellied Plover	X		Waterloo Bay
Southern Lapwing	X		Waterloo Bay and Carli Bay (on the grass in the little park)
Semipalmated Plover	X		Waterloo Bay
Wattled Jacana	X		Nariva Swamp, The Wildlife Trust
Whimbrel	X		Waterloo Bay
Ruddy Turnstone	X	X	Waterloo Bay and Bluewaters Inn
Red Knot	X		One at Waterloo Bay
Western Sandpiper	X		Common at Waterloo Bay
Short-billed Dowitcher	X		Waterloo Bay
Spotted Sandpiper	X		Several on rivers and by mangroves
Willet	X		Waterloo Bay

Lesser Yellowlegs	X		Waterloo Bay
Lesser Black-backed Gull	X		Brickfield
Laughing Gull	X		Brickfield and Waterloo Bay
Royal Tern	X	X	Brickfield
Black Skimmer	X		Brickfield
Rock Pigeon	X		Feral pigeons - very abundant in places
Pale-vented Pigeon		X	Seen well at Bluewaters, also elsewhere on Tobago
Common Ground-Dove	X		Only seen once - not common
Ruddy Ground-Dove	X	X	Extremely common in places on Trinidad especially Nariva
White-tipped Dove	X	X	Seen well creeping along the lower path at Pax, seen in flight elsewhere and also on Tobago
Gray-fronted Dove	X		Seen only at Asa Wright, calling almost continuously
Greater Ani	X		Nariva Swamp
Smooth-billed Ani	X		Nariva Swamp
Striped Cuckoo	X		Perched on wires near Arena Forest
Squirrel Cuckoo	X		Seen once in trees on the W side of Nariva Swamp
Tropical Screech-Owl	X		Excellent views of a roosting bird at Caroni Swamp
Ferruginous Pygmy- Owl	X		Kenny's recording brought in a real one in - a very angry little owl!
Short-tailed Nighthawk	X		A bird seen from the veranda at Asa Wright when it was getting pretty dark. No sign of it the following night.
White-tailed Nightjar		X	At least 6 birds on Flagstaff Hill road, Tobago, at dusk
Common Potoo		X	Two roosting birds located by Newton George on Tobago, near the road to Argyle Falls.
Oilbird	X		Asa Wright
Short-tailed Swift	X	X	The common swift but not seen very often or well
Gray-rumped Swift	X		At Asa Wright and Blanchisseuse Road
Fork-tailed Palm-Swift	X		Waller Field
White-necked Jacobin	X	X	Regular at all feeders on both islands
Rufous-breasted Hermit	X	X	Occasional on feeders at Pax and Newton George's home, on Torch Ginger at Asa Wright
Green Hermit	X		Occasional on feeders at Pax
Little Hermit	X		On flowers at Pax and Asa Wright, rarely at feeders
Ruby-topaz Hummingbird		X	Not seen on Trinidad (they leave the island for several months), seen at Newton George's home at Speyside on Tobago - I am not clear whether they had just arrived or had actually never been away
Green-throated Mango	X		Good views of a single bird on the Caroni Swamp boat trip
Black-throated Mango	X		Fairly common at feeders at Pax and Asa Wright
Tufted Coquette	X		On Vervain flowers at Asa Wright and at the Guan viewing spot
Long-billed Starthroat	X		Occasional on feeders at Pax
Blue-tailed Emerald	X		Occasionally seen on the Pax road and on the Pax feeders
Blue-chinned Sapphire	X		Seen mostly away from feeders in a range of locations
White-tailed Sabrewing		X	Several birds seen at Gilpin Trace
White-chested Emerald	X		Common at feeders
Copper-rumped Hummingbird	X	X	Very common at feeders, defends feeders from all comers!
Green-backed Trogon	X		Seen several times in any kind of forest, often near habitation
Collared Trogon		X	Only seen on the Blanchisseuse Road
Trinidad Motmot		X	Not seen on Trinidad, though heard at Asa Wright. Seen well at Bluewaters Inn and on the mountain road.
Ringed Kingfisher	X		Mangroves at Nariva and Caroni

Belted Kingfisher		X	By the sea at Speyside
Green Kingfisher	X	X	Mangroves at Nariva and The Wildlife Trust
American Pygmy Kingfisher	X		Caroni Swamp - one bird flew past
Rufous-tailed Jacamar	X	X	Seen at Pax and the Blanchisseuse Road on Trinidad, and Starwood Trace and the mountain road on Tobago
Channel-billed Toucan	X		Nariva Swamp parrot roost, the guan viewing point and elsewhere
Red-crowned Woodpecker		X	Excellent views at Bluewaters Inn, also on the mountain road
Red-rumped Woodpecker	X		Seen several times in forests
Golden-olive Woodpecker	X		Seen several times in forests
Lineated Woodpecker	X		Seen on the Blanchisseuse Road
Crimson-crested Woodpecker	X		Seen on the Blanchisseuse Road at a well-known site in Morne Bleu
Yellow-headed Caracara	X		Nariva Swamp
Crested Caracara	X		Nariva Swamp
Bat Falcon	X		One flying down the valley below the rear Pax veranda at dusk
Peregrine Falcon	X	X	One at the Caroni rice fields and one on Little Tobago
Lilac-tailed Parrotlet	X		Poor views of two small flocks flying high at Arena Forest
Blue-headed Parrot	X		Two small flocks in flight at Morne Bleu in the afternoon
Yellow-crowned Parrot	X		A number of birds at the parrot roost at Nariva Swamp
Orange-winged Parrot	X	X	Common at Pax and many other places. Huge numbers on Flagstaff Hill in Tobago
Green-rumped Parrotlet	X		Pairs seen in a number of places in the lowlands. Excellent views of a pair in a very large tree just outside the Pax front door.
Red-bellied Macaw	X		About 25 birds coming in to roost at Waller Field, excellent views of perched birds eating fruit
Great Antshrike	X		One pair seen from the Discovery Trail at Asa Wright
Black-crested Antshrike	X		Several birds called in along the tarmac path at Caroni
Barred Antshrike	X	X	A striking but quite common bird in gardens and secondary habitat
Plain Antwren		X	Only seen well at Gilpin Trace
White-flanked Antwren	X		In the forest above Pax
White-fringed Antwren		X	On an overgrown bank next to the mountain road on Tobago
Silvered Antbird	X		A pair in the mangroves by a river bridge at Nariva Swamp
White-bellied Antbird	X		Poor views of a female at Asa Wright. This apparently quite common bird almost completely eluded us.
Black-faced Antthrush	X		A singing bird was whistled in (by me!) on the Discovery Trail at Asa Wright
Olivaceous Woodcreeper		X	Good views of this potential split on the mountain road on Tobago
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	X		Seen well at Arena Forest, also Blanchisseuse Road
Cocoa Woodcreeper	X		Seen in the forest above Pax
Straight-billed Woodcreeper	X		Called in by the guide on the Caroni Swamp boat trip
Streak-headed Woodcreeper	X		Arena Forest and elsewhere
Streaked Xenops	X		Blanchisseuse Road at Morne Bleu
Yellow-chinned Spinetail	X		Nariva Swamp, next to its huge nest
Stripe-breasted Spinetail		X	Newton George found this little mouse-like bird for us on Gilpin Trace and we had great views

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	X		Seen several times at Pax and in forest
Forest Elaenia	X		Only seen once, on the Pax road
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	X	X	Seen several times at the edge of forest
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher	X		Only seen once, on the Pax road
Yellow-olive Flycatcher	X		Only seen once, on the Pax road
Yellow-breasted Flycatcher	X		This supposedly common bird had eluded us so Kenny called one in at Caroni Swamp
Euler's Flycatcher	X		Only seen once, on the Pax road
Olive-sided Flycatcher	X		On outskirts of Arena Forest
Fuscous Flycatcher	X	X	An apparently rare bird on Trinidad but we saw it twice, both times with experienced guides who confirmed the identity - once on the edge of the forest at Pax and once at a spot just beyond the Guan viewing point. Also seen briefly on the mountain road in Tobago
Pied Water-Tyrant	X		Nariva Swamp and Caroni rice fields
White-headed Marsh Tyrant	X		Nariva Swamp
Venezuelan Flycatcher		X	On the mountain road in Tobago but also heard on Starwood Trace
Brown-crested Flycatcher	X	X	Several on the Pax road on one day, a regular bird in the gardens at Bluewaters Inn
Great Kiskadee	X		Common on Trinidad
Boat-billed Flycatcher	X		Only one seen well, demolishing a huge bug in the tree outside Pax Guesthouse
Piratic Flycatcher	X		One seen, at the parrot roost at Nariva
Sulphury Flycatcher	X		Seen well at Waller Field
Tropical Kingbird	X	X	Common
Gray Kingbird	X	X	A few on Trinidad, quite common on Tobago
Bearded Bellbird	X		A good scope view from the Asa Wright veranda; otherwise they could be heard very well and very loudly on the Discovery Trail but we could never see them. I think help from a guide was required!
Blue-backed Manakin		X	Seen poorly at Gilpin Trace, but not a new bird for us so we did not try for better views
White-bearded Manakin	X		The lek on the Discovery Trail at Asa Wright was deserted the first time we visited in the afternoon, but was very lively in the morning at 7:00 am.
Golden-headed Manakin	X		Not lekking but several males seen well on the Blanchisseuse Road
Black-tailed Tityra	X		Only seen once - 3 birds at the Guan viewing spot
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	X		Heard often - seen well on the Blanchisseuse Road
Scrub Greenlet		X	Seen easily on Tobago at Starwood Trace, Flagstaff Hill and the mountain road
Golden-fronted Greenlet	X		Seen several times - Arena Forest, Blanchisseuse Road
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	X		Common
Gray-breasted Martin	X		Common
White-winged Swallow	X		Quite common in open habitat
House Wren	X	X	Common
Rufous-breasted Wren	X	X	Quite common in edge of forest habitats but hard to see well. Lovely but very variable song.
Long-billed Gnatwren	X		Seen once in Arena Forest
Yellow-legged Thrush		X	Gilpin Trace in the afternoon
Cocoa Thrush	X		Best views at Pax in the early morning but also seen elsewhere in forest

Spectacled Thrush	X	X	Quite common in forest
White-necked Thrush	X	X	Quite common in higher-altitude forest
Tropical Mockingbird	X	X	Common
Northern Waterthrush	X	X	Surprisingly common by water, mangroves or just by the side of the road
American Redstart		X	Flitting through the forest at Gilpin Trace
Yellow Warbler	X		Seen in various wet habitats and forest
Golden-crowned Warbler	X		In the forest above Pax
Masked/Red-capped Cardinal	X		Good views at The Wildlife Trust and also at Caroni Swamp
White-lined Tanager	X	X	Common - the females are commonly mistaken for Woodcreepers and Cocoa Thrushes!
Silver-beaked Tanager	X		Occasional at feeders
Blue-gray Tanager	X	X	Quite common
Palm Tanager	X	X	Very common at Pax and elsewhere
Speckled Tanager	X		Seen on a fruiting tree on the Blanchisseuse Road
Turquoise Tanager	X		Seen on the Pax Road and occasionally elsewhere
Bay-headed Tanager	X		Seen on a fruiting tree on the Blanchisseuse Road
Blue Dacnis	X		A few seen in forests but not at feeders
Purple Honeycreeper	X		Very common at feeders
Green Honeycreeper	X		Common at feeders
Bicolored Conebill	X		Seen at the mangroves at Nariva Swamp and on the Caroni Swamp boat trip
Saffron Finch	X		A flock of about 20 in the little park at Carli Bay
Blue-black Grassquit	X	X	Very common in agricultural and scrub habitat. They were displaying - jumping a metre in the air and calling "zzzzzwwwiii" as they descend. (Hence the local name "Johnny Jump-up")
Bananaquit	X	X	Abundant at feeders and also in the forest
Black-faced Grassquit		X	A few seen on Starwood Trace and by the road
Yellow-bellied Seedeater	X		Several singing birds on the Pax road
Grayish Saltator	X		Quite common in scrubby and edge of forest habitat
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager	X		Seen well at Arena Forest feeding on army ants
Red-breasted Blackbird	X		One distant bird seen on the approach road to Aripo
Carib Grackle	X	X	Quite common in semi-urban/urban environments
Yellow-hooded Blackbird	X		Good views at The Wildlife Trust and also at Caroni rice fields
Shiny Cowbird	X	X	Seen at Nariva and ?somewhere on Tobago!
Giant Cowbird	X		Nariva
Yellow Oriole	X		Excellent views at The Wildlife Trust and Asa Wright
Yellow-rumped Cacique	X		Only a couple of birds seen
Crested Oropendola	X	X	Common at Asa Wright
Trinidad Euphonia	X		Calling birds on the outskirts of Arena forest were too far away but a female was eventually tempted in. The females are distinctive as is the call (pee pee).
Violaceous Euphonia	X		Common at feeders
Common Waxbill	X		Caroni rice fields