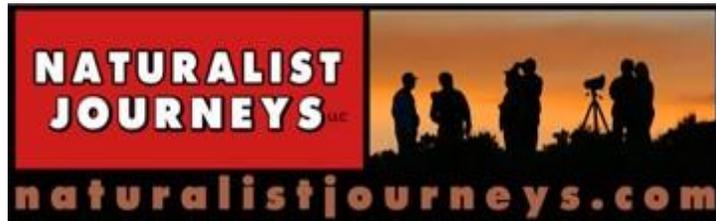


# Best of Trinidad | Species List

April 21-28, 2018 | Compiled by Bob Meinke



GUIDE **BOB MEINKE**, WITH EXPERT ASA WRIGHT NATURE CENTER NATURALISTS **ROODAL AND DAVE RAMLAL**, AND **11 PARTICIPANTS**: KELLY, JULIANA, BILL, CAROLINE, MARY ELLEN, GEORGE, JANE, SUSAN, MICHAEL, CATHERINE, and DUNCAN

## SUMMARY

The compilation below summarizes our sightings, covering 171 bird species, seen by all or at least some of the participants. An “**HO**” placed after a species name means the bird was *heard only and not sighted*, while “**LO**” designates those few species *only spotted by the trip leader or a lodge guide*. The ordering of families and species follows the Asa Wright Nature Center booklet we used on the trip, with a few exceptions, i.e., where family affiliation or species-level taxonomy have been changed to reflect the most recent updates appearing in the Clements Checklist of Birds of the World (Cornell Lab of Ornithology; <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist/>).

## BIRDS

### Tinamidae: Tinamous (1)

**Little Tinamou (HO)** (*Crypturellus soui*) Birds were heard clearly, in the heavy brush at Wallerfield (former site of Waller Air Force Base, an American installation abandoned after World War II)

### Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (1)

**Blue-winged Teal** (*Spatula discors*) A pair of birds were seen very briefly flying near the beach during our drive to Nariva Swamp

### Cracidae: Guans and Chachalacas (1)

**Trinidad Piping-Guan** (*Pipile pipile*) Fifteen to twenty of this critically endangered cracid (fewer than 200 are known to still exist) were watched and photographed on the hills above Grand Riviere during our stay at Mt. Plaisir—with very distinctive coloration, this is one of the most unusual guan species known (*the only bird species endemic to the island of Trinidad*)

### Pelecanidae: Pelicans (1)

**Brown Pelican** (*Pelicanus occidentalis*) Seen flying along the beach during our trip to Nariva Swamp, on the east coast of Trinidad

### Fregatidae: Frigatebirds (1)

**Magnificent Frigatebird** (*Fregata magnificens*) Same general location as Brown Pelican

### Ardeidae: Herons (9)

**Great Blue Heron** (*Ardea herodias*) Observed at Caroni Swamp and along the Nariva River

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*) Common, seen repeatedly during our drives in the lowlands

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**Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*) A rare species in Trinidad (looks similar to Snowy Egret), a pair was seen wading in the Arouca River (where we stopped by the bridge on our way to Caroni Swamp)

**Snowy Egret** (*Egretta thul*) In several scattered locations at both Nariva and Caroni Swamp



**Little Blue Heron** (*Egretta caerulea*) The most common heron species at Caroni Swamp

**Tricolored Heron** (*Egretta tricolor*) A few birds were associated with the Scarlet Ibis at Caroni Swamp

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*) Seen daily during our drives in the lowlands

**Striated Heron** (*Butorides striata*) Uncommon and secretive, seen at both Caroni and Nariva Swamp

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nyctanassa nycticorax*) A single bird was seen at the Arouca River on our way to Caroni Swamp

Little Blue Heron (Catherine Manschot and Duncan Boyd)

### **Cochleariidae: Boat-billed Heron (1)**

**Boat-billed Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) One immature bird was seen perched at Caroni Swamp

### **Threskiornithidae: Ibises and Spoonbills (1)**

**Scarlet Ibis** (*Eudocimus ruber*) Hundreds of birds were seen roosting, wading, and flying by in scattered flocks during our boat trip at Caroni Swamp—stunning colors

### **Carthartidae: New World Vultures (2)**

**Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*) Seen daily in the lowlands and mountains

**Turkey Vulture** (*Cathartes aura*) Common and observed throughout the trip

### **Phoenicopteridae: Flamingos (1)**

**American Flamingo** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) Thirty or more of these graceful birds seen feeding in small groups in lagoons at Caroni Swamp

### **Pandionidae: Osprey (1)**

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) Two or three birds were seen cruising the beach at Grand Riviere

### **Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites, and Eagles (11)**

**Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Elanoides forficatus*) A single bird was seen by Bob and Kelly, soaring above the treetops at the turnoff from Blanchisseuse Road to Asa Wright Nature Centre (AWNC)

**Pearl Kite** (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) A well-hidden female on a nest was pointed out by Dave in a tree near Caroni Swamp—that said, despite using the scope, we only had the barest of glimpses

**Plumbeous Kite** (*Ictinia plumbea*) Seen one day along the AWNC entrance road, and then later along upper Blanchisseuse Road, where we stopped at the top of the hill for a quick birding walk in the forest (this is the site where you may remember some TV reporters were doing an interview at that rural home, and where some apparently illicit logging had recently taken place)

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**White Hawk** (*Pseudastur albicollis*) Seen twice (at a distance) from the viewing deck at AWNC, the white plumage of the birds standing out against the green forest background

**Gray-lined Hawk** (*Buteo nitida*) We had good looks at an immature bird in the fields near Nariva Swamp, as well as a mature bird the day we drove to Grand Riviere

**Common Black Hawk** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) Seen above the forest canopy along Blanchisseuse Road, flying near the White-bearded Manakin lek at AWNC, and in the hills near Grand Riviere

**Savanna Hawk** (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) Seen in open fields and pastures near Aripo Savannah

**Short-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo brachyurus*) A few birds were soaring near AWNC and at Caroni Swamp

**Zone-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo albonotatus*) Several birds seen, at AWNC and in the lowlands, usually flying with Turkey Vultures

**Black Hawk-Eagle** (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) A single bird was spotted by Bob at a distance from the verandah at AWNC, with another seen much closer by the group during a stop along upper Blanchisseuse Road (see Plumbeous Kite)

**Ornate Hawk-Eagle** (*Spizaetus ornatus*) Seen by a few of the group during a morning bird walk along the AWNC entry road (soaring high in the sky, but color and silhouette were distinctive)

### **Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (2)**

**Crested Caracara** (*Caracara cheriway*) A single perched bird was pointed out by Roodal towards the end of our day at Nariva Swamp

**Yellow-headed Caracara** (*Milvago chimachima*) Several birds appeared at dusk at the abandoned Wallerfield airbase, and a pair was also seen cruising along the beach (above the turtle nests) at Grand Riviere

### **Charadriidae: Plovers (2)**

**Southern Lapwing** (*Vanellus chilensis*) Common, observed in grassy fields along the edge of the Piarco International Airport and in various agricultural settings

**Semipalmated Plover** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) Along the sandy banks of the Arouca River, viewed from the bridge during our afternoon stop on the way to Caroni Swamp

### **Recurvirostridae: Stilts and Avocets (1)**

**Black-necked Stilt** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Same location as Semipalmated Plover

### **Jacanidae: Jacanas (1)**

**Wattled Jacana** (*Jacana jacana*) A few birds were seen foraging in roadside ditches in agricultural fields adjacent to Nariva Swamp

### **Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Snipe (7)**

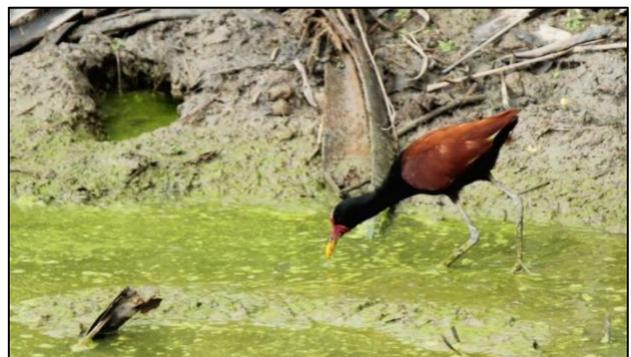
**Greater Yellowlegs** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) Same location as Semipalmated Plover

**Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*) Same location as Semipalmated Plover; Greater and Lesser were together in a mixed flock

**Spotted Sandpiper** (*Actitis macularius*) Seen at

Caroni Swamp along the banks under the mangroves, and also observed on the sand at Grand Riviere

**Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*) Seen by a few of us along the windy beach where we stopped for our picnic lunch, the day we travelled to Nariva Swamp



Wattled Jacana (Catherine Manschot and Duncan Boyd)

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**Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*) Best views were had of a flock feeding along the sandy beach at the mouth of the Nariva River

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** (*Calidris pusilla*) Same location as Sanderling; also seen from the boat on exposed sandbars in the Scarlet Ibis lagoons at Caroni Swamp

**Stilt Sandpiper** (*Calidris himantopus*) A single bird was pointed out by Dave as it worked the weedy shoreline along the Arouca River (see Semipalmated Plover)

### **Laridae: Gulls and Terns (1)**

**Laughing Gull** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) Several seen near the beach at Grande Riviere

### **Columbidae: Pigeons & Doves (8)**

**Rock (Feral) Pigeon** (*Columba livia*) Locally common in urban areas on Trinidad (introduced)

**Eurasian Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*) Less common than the former species—also near homes and gardens (introduced)

**Pale-vented Pigeon** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) Typically occurs away from the mountains, mostly seen in low foothills and wooded wetland areas—we saw the species at Nariva and Caroni Swamps

**Scaled Pigeon** (*Patagioenas speciosa*) Not common, but individual birds were often prominently perched in full view, and easily spotted from the AWNC verandah (best seen with the scope)

**Eared Dove (LO)** (*Zenaida auriculata*) Small flocks were seen in town areas on the way up to AWNC from the airport the first day

**Ruddy Ground Dove** (*Columbina talpacoti*) Seen most days during our excursions to the lower elevation areas, both urban and rural

**White-tipped Dove** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) Seen along the old runways at Wallerfield

**Gray-fronted Dove** (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) A few birds were seen walking along shaded trails at AWNC

### **Psittacidae: Parrots (5)**

**Brown-throated Parakeet** (*Eupsittula pertinax*) Nesting birds were seen peering from a tree cavity, during an early stop at some grassy, fenced fields (Aripo area) on our way to Nariva Swamp

**Blue-and-yellow Macaw** (*Ara araraunca*) Three birds were seen feeding in palms, near a side road (by some homes) that we were walking and birding along near Nariva Swamp (this species was previously extirpated from Trinidad, and is now being reintroduced with some apparent success)

**Green-rumped Parrotlet** (*Forpus passerinus*) An energetic pandemonium of parrotlets (yes, that's actually the name for a flock of parrots) put in a noisy appearance at the same location as the Brown-throated Parakeet (above)

**Blue-headed Parrot** (*Pionus menstruus*) A flock of this uncommon and beautiful species was seen the day we birded upper Blanchisseuse Road, to the east of AWNC—perched cooperatively on some nearby utility wires, their appearance coincided nicely with one of our mobile rum punch events

**Orange-winged Parrot** (*Amazona amazonica*) By far the most common of the five parrots we encountered, seen and heard daily

### **Cuculidae: Cuckoos (3)**

**Squirrel Cuckoo** (*Playa cayana*) Observed from the verandah at AWNC, beautiful scope views

**Greater Ani** (*Crotophaga major*) One of our Caroni target species, several flocks of this garrulous, pale-eyed ani were observed from the boat during our afternoon outing through the mangroves

**Smooth-billed Ani** (*Crotophaga ani*) Encountered several times, most memorably when a rather lethargic flock was seen bathing in a brook and then napping, next to the Brasso Seco Chocolate Company (where we had lunch)

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### **Strigidae: Owls (2)**

**Tropical Screech Owl** (*Megascops choliba*) Fabulous looks at a perched bird, during our night drive on the old roads and runways at the Wallerfield site (see Little Tinamou)

**Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) Heard frequently at AWNC, a family of three birds was also seen well by most of the group (at nest boxes along the entry road)

### **Caprimulgidae: Nighthawks & Nightjars (2)**

**Common Pauraque** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) Same location and time as Tropical Screech Owl—not seen elsewhere on the trip, but very common at the Wallerfield site

**White-tailed Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus cayennensis*) Same location as Tropical Screech Owl—less common than Common Pauraque, but we had several good looks at this shy species (thanks to Dave's perseverance)

### **Nyctibiidae: Potoos (1)**

**Common Potoo** (*Nyctibius griseus*) Just a single bird seen on the trip, but we had prolonged and excellent views as it perched on a post—same general location as Tropical Screech Owl

### **Steatornithidae: Oilbird (1)**

**Oilbird** (*Steatornis caripensis*) Several were visible inside Dunston Cave at AWNC—despite the predictability of finding the birds here, their global rarity, curious appearance, and unique biology make it a special encounter

### **Apodidae: Swifts (4)**

**Short-tailed Swift** (*Chaetura brachyura*) Flocks were seen primarily above the wooded hills overlooking the village of Grand Riviere, as well as along the northern coastal road

**Band-rumped Swift** (*Chaetura spinicaudus*) Occasional birds could be picked out in the forest around AWNC (when they flew low against a dark background and their pale rump was obvious)

**Gray-rumped Swift** (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) Dave picked out a few birds circling the treetops, in the higher forests along Blanchisseuse Road

**Fork-tailed Palm-Swift** (*Tachornis squamata*) Far more distinctive in flight than the three preceding species, a flock of a dozen or more birds were seen at dusk at the Wallerfield airfield site, just prior to our night drive (while we were enjoying “take out” served on the tailgate of the truck)

### **Trochilidae: Hummingbirds (12)**

**Green Hermit** (*Phaethornis guy*) Seen most days of the trip, but such an exceptionally graceful species that you never tired of it—we were especially fond of a mother and her young that resided in the parlor of the main building at AWNC, in a nest attached to the cord of a hanging light fixture!

**Little Hermit** (*Phaethornis longuemareus*) Seen briefly by a few of us in the AWNC gardens

**White-necked Jacobin** (*Florisuga mellivora*) Uniquely patterned, and easily the most common hummingbird during our stay at AWNC (just as it is at many lodges in Central and northern South America)

**Brown Violetear** (*Colibri delphinae*) When a guide screeches to a halt and suddenly spies a great “find,” we all know there's a chance they knew the bird might be there—advance scouting can work wonders. But when Dave, while driving us down Blanchisseuse Road at a good clip, abruptly stopped, cocked his ear, and then vaulted out and pointed to a singing (squeaking, actually) Brown Violetear, perched 100 feet downslope, we knew that was pure skill—we were duly impressed

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**Green-throated Mango** (*Anthracothorax viridgula*) Several birds were seen flying and perched, as we slowly boated through the mangrove-lined backwaters at Caroni Swamp

**Black-throated Mango** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) Both males and females (the latter easy to pick out with their jagged ventral stripe) were common at AWNC feeders

**Ruby-topaz Hummingbird** (*Chrysolampis mosquitus*) Seen a few times at AWNC, typically in the afternoon—generally working flowers and not seen at the feeders (very unique colors)

**Tufted Coquette** (*Lophornis ornatus*) Reasonably common at AWNC feeders, as well as in the gardens surrounding the buildings—you can just never get enough of coquettes...

**Blue-chinned Sapphire** (*Chlorestes notata*) Another common (and very colorful) hummer at the AWNC feeders, and unlike some species, it tends to hold its own against the larger Jacobins

**White-chested Emerald** (*Amazilia brevirostris*) Comparatively drab (but easy to identify due to their extensive white underparts), White-chested Emeralds were common on the AWNC verandah

**Copper-rumped Hummingbird** (*Amazilia tobaci*) Another regular visitor to AWNC feeders during our stay (in the same genus as the preceding species, yet nothing like it in appearance)

**Long-billed Starthroat** (*Heliomaster longirostris*) Seen by a few of us maybe twice or three times on the deck at AWNC—an easy hummingbird to pick out due to its candy-red gorget and longer than average bill

### **Trogonidae: Trogons (3)**

**Green-backed Trogon** (*Trogon viridis*) Generally scarce, but seen well a few times at AWNC (and often heard) during the first four days of our visit

**Guianan Trogon** (*Trogon violaceus*) Also infrequent, but seen several days during our field trips in the Northern Range on Trinidad, and also in the forest outside Grand Riviere

**Collared Trogon** (*Trogon collaris*) The rarest of the trogons in Trinidad, we saw a beautiful male along Blanchisseuse Road—another bird was subsequently seen along the Bamboo Trail at AWNC

### **Momotidae: Motmots (1)**

**Trinidad Motmot** (*Momotus bahamensis*) This elegant species was seen at various points along the entry road into AWNC, and three very vocal birds were perched together one morning in bamboo, within 100 feet of the main building (*one of only two endemic birds in Trinidad and Tobago*)

### **Alcedinidae: Kingfishers (3)**

**Ringed Kingfisher** (*Megaceryle torquata*) A couple birds were seen in flight along the Arouca River, when we stopped here on the way down to Caroni Swamp

**Green Kingfisher** (*Chloroceryle americana*) One bird briefly seen at Caroni Swamp

**American Pygmy Kingfisher** (*Chloroceryle aenea*) American Pygmy is the rarest kingfisher in Trinidad (and in the Americas as a whole), yet we saw the species at three spots!—we had particularly good views along a small creek near Nariva Swamp, as well as from the boat at Caroni Swamp

### **Galbulidae: Jacamars (1)**

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar** (*Galbula ruficauda*) A pair of very active birds were seen flycatching along Blanchisseuse Road on our way back to AWNC, after a long day of mountain birding

### **Ramphastidae: Toucans (1)**

**Channel-billed Toucan** (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) Observed from the birding porch at AWNC, in the canopy along Blanchisseuse Road, and in the forested hills above Grand Riviere

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### **Picidae: Woodpeckers (3)**

**Red-rumped Woodpecker** (*Venilornis kirkii*) An uncommon species located along Blanchisseuse Road as we were heading to Brasso Seco—a male and female were seen high in the trees

**Golden-olive Woodpecker** (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) Seen from the verandah at AWNC and in the forest along the entry road

**Lineated Woodpecker** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) Heard loudly drumming in the forest at AWNC, birds were seen several times in the higher canopy on various trails below the main lodge building

### **Furnariidae: Ovenbirds, Woodcreepers, and Allies (7)**

**Pale-breasted Spinetail** (*Synallaxis albescens*) Seen fleetingly in forest understory on our second day in Grand Riviere—Roodal worked and worked at coaxing the bird out into the open, with limited success

**Stripe-breasted Spinetail (LO)** (*Synallaxis cinnamomea*) Observed by Dave and Bob from the van, as we wound down the hill from AWNC on our way to Caroni Swamp, when a single bird briefly sat in the road ahead of us before zipping back into the forest

**Yellow-chinned Spinetail** (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) Seen reasonably well (for a spinetail), when it ducked in and out of low brush bordering a marshy, agricultural area near Nariva Swamp—we were in the midst of a tea and rum punch break at the time, yet most of us still saw the bird

**Streaked Xenops** (*Xenops rutilans*) Seen a couple times, best look was had by those of us on an early morning walk with Ann Sealey (AWNC Manager) and her grandson

**Plain Brown Woodcreeper** (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) Observed at AWNC along the trail to the Oilbird Cave

**Straight-billed Woodcreeper** (*Dendroplex picus*) Three or four birds observed in the mangrove understory at Caroni Swamp

**Cocoa Woodcreeper** (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) A forest edge species, several were seen along upper Blanchisseuse Road and by the lower trails at AWNC (its unhurried, whistled song was heard more often than birds were seen)

### **Thamnophilidae: Antbirds (6)**

**Great Antshrike** (*Taraba major*) An often shy species, several were seen well at AWNC

**Black-crested Antshrike** (*Sakesphorus canadensis*) Roodal and Dave worked hard to locate several birds in a marshy riparian area during our trip to Nariva Swamp

**Barred Antshrike** (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) Surprisingly common at AWNC, with both males and females seen almost daily

**Plain Antvireo** (*Dysithamnus mentalis*) We had excellent mid-canopy views of this uncommon forest resident during a stop along upper Blanchisseuse Road

**White-flanked Antwren** (*Myrmotherula axillaris*) Seen on our first morning at Grande Riviere, several of these birds were frantically working the understory below the roost trees for the Piping-Guans

**Silvered Antbird (HO)** (*Sclateria naevia*) Roodal twice had this cryptic species within our grasp, but despite birds calling only a few feet from us (both at Nariva Swamp, and on our morning forest walk near Grand Riviere), we could never see them

### **Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (14)**

**Forest Elaenia** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) Observed several times in the forest surrounding AWNC

**Yellow-bellied Elaenia** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) We had nice views of this species raising its crest, as it sat on a wire during a stop on our way to Nariva Swamp (see Brown-throated Parakeet)

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**Euler's Flycatcher** (*Lathrotriccus euleri*) Considered uncommon, we nonetheless saw this species on several days (often near bamboo), at AWNC and at stops along Blanchisseuse Road

**Tropical Pewee** (*Contopus cinereus*) Birds were seen on two days, perched on open branches near the upper entrance to Motmot Trail at AWNC (may have been the same individual)

**Pied Water-Tyrant** (*Fluvicola pica*) Seen picking through the weeds in abandoned farmland near Nariva Swamp, and also below the bridge during our Arouca River stop (see Semipalmated Plover)

**White-headed Marsh Tyrant** (*Arundinicola leucocephala*) A couple birds were spotted in wet agricultural fields during the latter half of our day at Nariva Swamp—a striking species

**Brown-crested Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) Seen perched in trees at Nariva Swamp

**Great Kiskadee** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) A common bird throughout our trip, seen and heard daily

**Boat-billed Flycatcher** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) Very similar to Great Kiskadee, but less common, we had good looks at birds along upper Blanchisseuse Road and near Brasso Seco village

**Streaked Flycatcher** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) A bird sat one morning in the open, just off the verandah at AWNC, long enough for several of us to get good looks

**Piratic Flycatcher** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) Mostly a breeding visitor from South America, several birds were in residence at AWNC during our stay—they were busy building nests, using materials pirated from the hanging nests of Crested Oropendolas

**Sulphury Flycatcher** (*Tyrannopus sulphurea*) A target species for us in the remnant palm forest habitat at the Wallerfield airbase site, we saw birds hunting and vocalizing

**Tropical Kingbird** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) Common and seen daily during the tour

**Gray Kingbird** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) A few birds were noted on wires on the drive into the Wallerfield airbase site, prior to our night drive

### Tityridae: Tityras (1)

**Black-tailed Tityra** (*Tityra cayana*) Seen by Juliana along Blanchisseuse Road, during a late afternoon roadside refreshment break (see Blue-headed Parrot)—the rest of the group missed out, being understandably preoccupied

### Cotingidae: Cotingas (1)

**Bearded Bellbird** (*Procnia averano*) Everyone comes to Asa Wright to see the bellbird, so it's fortunate that it's not hard to find—we saw (and certainly heard) the species (most of us several times), along the main trail that leads downhill into the forest from the lodge building

### Pipridae: Manakins (2)

#### **White-bearded Manakin**

(*Manacus manacus*) Locally common at AWNC, and mostly found at the long-established lek alongside the main trail, we also saw the species in the forest along upper Blanchisseuse Road



Manakin sign (Bob Meinke)

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**Golden-headed Manakin** (*Pipra erythrocephala*) Less common during our stay at AWNC than the preceding species, most of us nonetheless had decent looks at birds on a couple of occasions

### **Vireonidae: Vireos & Peppershrikes (2)**

**Golden-fronted Greenlet** (*Hylophilus qurantifrons*) We had multiple sightings of this tiny canopy dweller along the entry road into AWNC and Blanchisseuse Road—that said, the birds never sat still, and it was hard to get clear looks at them

**Rufous-browed Peppershrike** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) At AWNC we only heard the species, but during an afternoon forest walk near Grand Riviere with Roodal, we finally had excellent open views

### **Hirundinidae: Swallows (3)**

**Gray-breasted Martin** (*Progne chalybea*) Common at many locations, especially around agricultural fields near Nariva Swamp, and at Brasso Seco village

**White-winged Swallow** (*Tachycineta albiventer*) We saw this species many times, starting with our arrival at the airport (where it was nesting in the eaves), to Nariva and Caroni Swamps, Grand Riviere, and everywhere in-between

**Southern Rough-winged Swallow** (*Steigodopteryx ruficollis*) Another common species, seen zig-zagging overhead every day of the trip

### **Troglodytidae: Wrens (2)**

**Rufous-breasted Wren** (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) Commonly heard in forested areas in Trinidad, though often difficult to find—luckily, a bird was habitually hanging around a shrub below the AWNC verandah that several of the group were able to see

**House Wren** (*Troglodytes aedon*) Common at AWNC and seen daily

### **Polioptilidae: Gnatcatchers (1)**

**Long-billed Gnatwren** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) Birds were seen twice (with patience), as they darted into the brushy understory along the entry road into AWNC

### **Turdidae: Thrushes (3)**

**Cocoa Thrush** (*Turdus fumigates*) Common and seen every day of the trip—essentially exploits the same niche as the American Robin in North America

**Spectacled Thrush** (*Turdus nudigenis*) Nearly as common as the preceding taxon, especially so at AWNC (perhaps not quite as abundant around Grand Riviere)

**White-necked Thrush** (*Turdus albicollis*) The least common of the three thrushes we saw, it was occasionally seen along the trails at AWNC—a shy species and a bit of a skulker

### **Mimidae: Mockingbirds (1)**

**Tropical Mockingbird** (*Mimus gilvus*) Seen and heard daily, particularly in the lowlands

### **Parulidae: Wood-Warblers (4)**

**Tropical Parula** (*Parula pitaiyumi*) A single bird was seen during our morning bird walk with Roodal near Grand Riviere village

**Yellow Warbler (LO)** (*Dendroica petechia*) Two birds were seen by Bob in the mangroves as we waited to board our boat for the trip into Caronia Swamp

**Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) The species was occasionally seen early in the morning, foraging along the shaded paths below the lodge verandah at AWNC

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**Golden-crowned Warbler** (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) The species was best seen (though not well) during a stop along upper Blanchisseuse Road, where birds were high in the trees in a mixed flock with Golden-fronted Greenlets

### **Thraupidae: Tanagers & Allies (18)**

**Bananaquit** (*Coereba flaveola*) Possibly the most common species at AWNC, seen hourly

**Bicolored Conebill** (*Conirostrum bicolor*) Restricted to mangrove habitats, we had good looks at several birds at Caroni Swamp, as we waited for our boat to depart

**White-lined Tanager** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) The common black tanager (female was rusty-colored) that visited the AWNC feeders daily

**Red-crowned Ant-Tanager** (*Habia rubica*) Heard at AWNC, and then later seen well by a few of us during an afternoon walk with Roodal, in the forest outside Grand Riviere village

**Silver-beaked Tanager** (*Ramphocelus carbo*) Observed daily at the AWNC feeders, a stunning species with rich coloration

**Blue-gray Tanager** (*Thraupis episcopus*) Seen every day during the trip, and often at the AWNC feeders, though very common over a wide range of habitats and situations—one of the most widely recognized and abundant songbirds in the neotropics

**Palm Tanager** (*Thraupis palmarum*) Commonly associates with Blue-gray Tanager in Trinidad and elsewhere—also seen daily during our trip

**Turquoise Tanager** (*Tangara mexicana*) Infrequent at AWNC during our visit—a beautifully patterned species seen two or three times (never at the feeders)

**Bay-headed Tanager** (*Tangara gyrola*) Observed in small numbers on a few days at AWNC—very close views were had one afternoon from the verandah during tea time

**Blue Dacnis** (*Dacnis cayana*) A pair of birds were seen intermittently along the paved entry road into AWNC, always moving quickly through the lower branches

**Green Honeycreeper** (*Chlorophanes spiza*) Not always easy to see in some areas of Latin America, Green Honeycreepers were refreshingly abundant at AWNC, especially at the feeders

**Purple Honeycreeper** (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) Also common at AWNC and seen every day there, the bright yellow legs of adult males contrasted with the deep violet-purple plumage, and was a memorable combination

**Red-legged Honeycreeper** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) This is the dominant honeycreeper throughout much of Central America, but not so on Trinidad—we only saw a single bird, in a tree on the grounds of the home where we were watching the Piping-Guans

**Swallow Tanager** (*Tersina viridis*) We came across a breeding pair during a stop along upper Blanchisseuse Road—a ground-nesting species, we saw the two birds perched in trees, and then working on a nest under an overhanging mud bank

**Blue-black Grassquit** (*Volatinia jacarina*) Seen on several days, in lowland fields near Nariva and Caroni Swamps, and also along a road on the way into Grand Riviere



Bannaquit (Catherine Manschot and Duncan Boyd)

# Best of Trinidad | Species List

## April 21-28, 2018 | Compiled by Bob Meinke

**Sooty Grassquit** (*Tiaris fuliginosus*) A nice find by Dave, this is a forest-edge grassquit considered rare to uncommon on Trinidad—two birds were visible among flowering epiphytes in a tree along Blanchisseuse Road, as we descended towards Brasso Seco

**Red-capped Cardinal** (*Paroaria nigrogenis*) Two birds were seen, one near the Caroni Swamp entrance, and another in the mangrove habitat as we boated out towards the Scarlet Ibis lagoon

**Grayish Saltator** (*Saltator coerulescens*) A fairly common species at AWNC, seen occasionally at the feeders, more commonly in open forest or forest-edge habitats

### **Icteridae: American Orioles & Blackbirds (9)**

**Yellow-hooded Blackbird** (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) A pair of birds were located in heavy rushes abutting disused agricultural fields, as we birded the area around Nariva Swamp

**Red-breasted Meadowlark** (*Sturnella militaris*) Seen in a grassy, semi-developed industrial site near the Millennium Golf Club and Arouca River, during a brief stop our way to Caronia Swamp

**Carib Grackle** (*Quiscalus lugubris*) Common bird in urban and rural settings—seen almost daily

**Shiny Cowbird** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) Seen primarily during the first half of the trip—not as common as the grackle, but flocks were recorded several times in the lowlands and agricultural areas

**Giant Cowbird** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) Seen near Nariva Swamp, harassing Crested Oropendolas (same location as Pearl Kite)

**Yellow Oriole** (*Icterus nigrogularis*) Not common on the trip—seen once by Kelly in trees along the upslope, back end of the AWNC compound, and later in agricultural fields (see Brown-throated Parakeet) on the way to Nariva Swamp

**Moriche (Epaulet) Oriole** (*Icterus cayanensis chrysocephalus*) One of the featured birds during our late afternoon/evening outing to the abandoned airfield at Wallerfield (at least three or four were seen in Moriche Palms). The taxonomy of this distinctive taxon is in flux—some authorities consider the Moriche Oriole to represent a separate species (*Icterus chrysocephalus*), though prevailing opinion currently has it as a subspecies of the Epaulet Oriole (*Icterus cayanensis*) of South America

**Yellow-rumped Cacique** (*Cacicus cela*) Nesting colony with many birds seen in trees, where we stopped for a break on our way back to AWNC from Nariva Swamp (see Blue-headed Parrot)

**Crested Oropendola** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) This large, colorful species was literally unavoidable at AWNC, what with its rattling, croaking, almost mechanical vocalizations, and enormous, pendulous nests hanging from the trees—as with most oropendolas, it was truly an avian spectacle

### **Fringillidae: Cardueline Finches, Euphonias and Allies (2)**

**Trinidad Euphonia (HO)** (*Euphonia trinitatis*) Graham White (Chair of the AWNC Board of Management) did his best to help Bob locate a calling Trinidad Euphonia from the lodge verandah, but though we scanned every fruiting mistletoe we could see (mistletoe berries are their preferred food), no luck—maybe next time!

**Violaceous Euphonia** (*Euphonia violacea*) Much more cooperative than the previous species, this beautiful bird was seen daily at AWNC, often at the feeders

### **SPECIES OF INTEREST OTHER THAN BIRDS (14)**

#### *Mammals*

**Red-rumped Agouti** (*Dasyprocta leporine*) These guinea-pig lookalikes were in charge of any spillage associated with the fruit feeders at AWNC—we saw them gorging every morning

**Red-tailed Squirrel** (*Sciurus granatensis*) Similarly adept to arboreal life as the squirrels we're used to in North America, the rich, rufous coloration of this species was eye-catching—it was commonly seen on the trees at AWNC

# Best of Trinidad | Species List

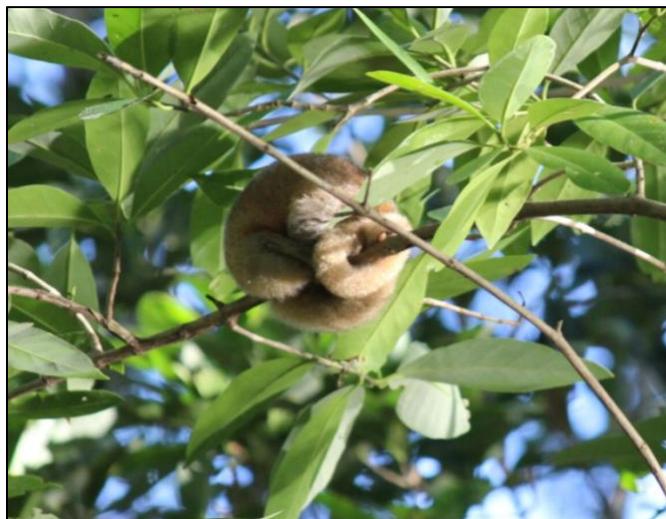
## April 21-28, 2018 | Compiled by Bob Meinke

**Tent-making Bat** (*Uroderma bilobatum*) Seen on our way down the trail to the oilbird population, these unique bats were nestled together under some foliage which they had folded over themselves (hence their name)—very cool

**Sac-wing Bat** (*Saccopteryx* sp.) This is probably the bat that we routinely saw flying in the forest, under trees or along the road, during daylight hours—exactly which species is a mystery (there are over 50 taxa of Sac-wing Bats), but this is a good guess according to Dave

**Proboscis Bat** (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) This is the best possible ID we have for the most common nocturnal bat we saw, which typically appeared soon after the rum punches were being doled out on the AWNC verandah—they were larger than the Sac-wing bats

**Silky Anteater** (*Cyclopes didactylus*) With all due respect to the bats and rodents just discussed, the Silky Anteater was, hands down, the most intriguing mammal of the trip, and we saw two of them (at Caroni Swamp)—an amazing little ball of fur



Silky Anteater (Catherin Manschot and Duncan Boyd)

### Reptiles

**Tropical House Gecko** (*Hemidactylus mabouia*) Seen around the outside lights on buildings at AWNC at night, as well as inside our rooms sometimes! This is a non-native species found the world over in the tropics

**Turnip-tail Gecko** (*Thecadactylus rapicauda*) One was seen outside Bob's cabin by a wall near the light, but it ran off up a tree when approached

**Giant Ameiva** (*Ameiva ameiva*) These were the fairly large, grey-brown lizards seen around AWNC, usually with some bright green coloration (either on the head or the back)—encountered by probably everyone whenever they walked the trails near the lodge

**Gold Tegu** (*Tupinambis teguixin*) This is the enormous monitor-like lizard that lumbered around the grounds of AWNC—it either enthralled you or terrified you, depending on your level of tolerance for hefty reptiles with long, wagging tongues—most of us saw these at one point or another

**Leatherback Sea Turtle** (*Dermochelys coriacea*) An amazing experience, we all watched several of these giants on the beach at Grand Riviere—the sheer size of these animals was hard to believe!

### Interesting Invertebrates

**Blue Morpho** (*Morpho peleides*) This is the enormous blue butterfly that fluttered around under the canopy and near trails at AWMC—most of us were probably familiar with this butterfly type from prior travels (there are many species called “Blue Morpho,” and this is just one of them)

**Pinktoe Tarantula** (*Avicularia avicularia*) One of two species of tarantula we were shown on the trip—we saw tarantulas using handrails (made from open-ended pipes) for homes during our visit to AWNC, and sitting on gates in the evening, but I can't remember which species was seen where

**Trinidad Chevroned Tarantula** (*Psalmopoeus cambridgei*) This is the other tarantula we saw at AWNC—though fascinating, both species were equally unsettling if you're not a fan of large, very hairy spiders that enjoy hiding in seemingly innocuous places, like the open-end of handrails

**Leaf-mimicking Katydid** (*Typophyllum* sp.) An amazing species related to crickets that looked *exactly* like a dead, brown leaf (with legs and long antennae)—spotted by Catherine and Duncan at AWNC