

## Trinidad, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Barbados

5-14 November 2010



This year our birding group decided to return to the Lesser Antilles to see a few more island endemics. Our trip was timed just after Hurricane Tomas strafed the Lesser Antilles, and we were thankful we didn't visit St. Lucia, which took a direct hit from the storm. Damage was evident on both Grenada and St. Vincent, mostly in the form of downed trees; we didn't encounter any travel difficulties. The storm also affected our ability to make a few last minute trip reservations, but thankfully everything worked out once we arrived. Trip participants were George Brown (Big Stone Gap, VA), Gordon Brown (Cary, NC), Stephen J. Dinsmore (Ames, IA), Andrew S. Fix (Cincinnati, OH), and Jay Gilliam (Norwalk, IA).

### 5 November

This was our travel day to Trinidad. Jay and I left Des Moines at 10:40 a.m., switched planes in Chicago and Miami, and finally arrived in Port of Spain, Trinidad at 10:30 p.m. Gordon and George joined us on the last flight after an unexpected delay in Raleigh caused them to miss the mid-day flight to Trinidad. The customs line was slow (1 hour) and then we picked up our baggage and proceeded to the rental car counter (Thrifty; \$621 for 4 days). We were expecting a shuttle from Asa Wright Nature Center, but they never showed up! We finally all piled into the rental car, got a GPS unit, and made the winding drive to Asa Wright where we arrived at 1:15 a.m. We were quickly shown to our rooms where we collapsed for a few hours of sleep! Andy flew to Trinidad on 4 November and we met him at Asa Wright.

### 6 November

We awoke at sunrise and immediately began birding the grounds at Asa Wright. We saw many of the common forest birds including Gray-fronted Dove, Tufted Coquette, Channel-billed Toucan, Lineated Woodpecker, Great and Barred antshrikes, several species of tanagers, and Purple Honeycreeper.

Breakfast was made-to-order omelets, rolls, toast, fresh fruit, and coffee or orange juice. We then went on a morning hike with guide Mukesh and saw Little Tinamou, Green Hermit, Plain-brown Woodcreeper, White-flanked Antwren, a displaying Bearded Bellbird, White-bearded and Golden-headed manakins on their leks, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Bare-eyed Thrush, and Bay-headed Tanager. We returned to the lodge for lunch at noon (ribs, rice and beans, several vegetables, rolls, and salad) and relaxed on the veranda.

Our afternoon was open, so we took a short 3-hour drive north along Blanchisseuse Road and saw Scaled Pigeon,



Orange-winged

parrot, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Euler's Flycatcher, Streaked Xenops, Red-eyed Vireo, White-necked Thrush, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Speckled Tanager, and Blue Dacnis. Many of these birds were on a short dead-end road to a communication tower. We returned to Asa Wright by 4:30 p.m. and relaxed a bit before rum punch at 5 p.m. (very tasty, and also quite strong!) and then dinner at 7 p.m. (fish filets, rice, mixed vegetables, rolls, and a dark cake for dessert). [partly cloudy, rain showers in mid-afternoon, temperature 25-31° C, winds light and variable]



## 7 November

We left early this morning (3:30 a.m.) with guide Dave Ramlal to bird the Grand Riviere area in northeastern Trinidad. We made the 2+ hour drive on winding roads at night and finally arrived just before 6 a.m. Our sack breakfast consisted of chicken sandwiches, fresh fruit, and a tasty fruit juice. The lodge at the top of the road above town was covered with interesting moths that were looking for a place to roost for the day. As the dawn chorus picked up we found a cooperative pair of Trinidad Piping Guans in a nutmeg tree right by the road. Other birds in this general area included Squirrel Cuckoo, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, Channel-billed Toucan, Silvered and White-bellied antbirds, Boat-billed Flycatcher, and Rufous-browed Peppershrike. At 8 a.m. we left the Grand Riviere area for the return trip to Asa Wright, which was even slower because of the traffic and a bike race (thankfully, headed in the opposite direction). On the drive



we saw a few birds including a Common Black-Hawk. We arrived at the center at 11 a.m. and relaxed on the veranda until lunch (barbeque chicken, rice and beans, cassava, macaroni and cheese, salad, cheese rolls [delicious!] and cake for dessert). At 1:30 p.m. we met Dave for an afternoon trip to



the Caroni Swamp. We stopped on the way to bird some wetlands near the town of Charlieville and saw Long-winged harrier, Merlin, Purple Gallinule, several species of shorebirds, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Pied Water-Tyrant, and Yellow-hooded Blackbird.

We arrived at the Caroni Swamp boat launch at 4 p.m. and quickly loaded into a boat for a private birding trip. Our local guide was Lester and he was very good at spotting birds. The ecology of the swamp is quite interesting and we learned all about the black, red, and

white mangroves and some of the associated species like the Tree-climbing Crab. We saw thousands of roosting herons, including many Scarlet Ibis, plus Green-rumped Parrotlet, Common Potoo, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Black-crested Antshrike, Bicolored Conebill, Red-capped Cardinal, a Spectacled Caiman, and many bats. As the ibis came to roost we enjoyed rum punch and raisin bread. We returned to the dock by 6:15 p.m. and then made the long drive back to Asa Wright Nature Center, where we arrived at 7 p.m. We immediately ate dinner (lamb steaks, rice and beans, carrots, salad, and white mousse for dessert) before retiring to the veranda for a few drinks. [partly cloudy, scattered rain in afternoon, temperature 26-32° C, wind ENE 5-10 mph]



## 8 November



Today we were on our own. We birded the Asa Wright grounds before breakfast and saw White Hawk, Trinidad Motmot (a recent split from Blue-crowned Motmot), and many Agoutis. Breakfast was made-to-order omelets, toast, cereal, fruit, and coffee or juice. After breakfast we loaded up and drove southeast to the Aripo Livestock Station, arriving there at 8:45 a.m. We spent almost 3 hours birding the main road that circles the farm and saw Savanna Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Pied Water-Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Turquoise Tanager, Yellow-hooded and Red-breasted blackbirds, Giant Cowbird, and Yellow Oriole.

We had a sack lunch (chicken sandwiches, salad, bananas, raisin bread, and juice) at Aripo and then drove to Waterloo to look for waterbirds. We arrived at Brickfield at 12:20 p.m.; the tide was coming in rapidly in the mid-day heat, so the shorebirds were mostly roosting

deep in the mangroves here and at neighboring Orange Valley. However, we saw Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, Black-necked Stilt, Southern Lapwing, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated and Western sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitcher. We also watched an adult Peregrine Falcon capture a Western Sandpiper on the wing. Other interesting birds were a small flock of Blue-winged Teal, 4 Clapper Rails, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and Large-billed and Common terns. From here we returned to the Aripo Savannah, arriving there at 4:15 p.m. We slowly



drove several roads in this area and saw Red-bellied Macaw (20+ flying over near dusk, presumably headed to a roost), Blue-headed Parrot, a very obliging Striped Cuckoo singing in plain view, Black-throated Mango, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Forest Elaenia, and Bare-eyed Thrush. We returned to Asa Wright by 6 p.m. and enjoyed a nice dinner (beef ribs, cassava [prepared like mashed potatoes], beans, salad, and peach mousse) before relaxing with drinks on the veranda until 8:30 p.m. [partly cloudy,

temperature 25-33° C, wind E 0-10 mph]

## 9 November

This was our last morning on Trinidad. We awoke early and birded the main trail below the lodge before returning at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast (made-to-order omelets, toast, fresh fruit, and coffee or juice). We then met our guide, Caleb, for a hike to the Oilbird cave. The Oilbird show was spectacular and we saw 40+ roosting birds in the cave, but no young. Our guide described their calls as being similar to “vomiting and being choked to death at the same time”, not a bad description in our opinion! Elsewhere along the hike we saw Gray-throated Leaf-tosser, Black-tailed Tityra, and enjoyed good looks at a cooperative male Great Antshrike. We returned to the center by 10 a.m., showered, packed, settled our bill, and left for the airport where we arrived at 11:45 a.m. The check-in went smoothly and we departed for Grenada on Liat Airline at 2:30 p.m.





We arrived in Port Salines, Grenada a half hour later and soon arranged for an 8-passenger minibus from Reggie's Car Rental (\$158 for 2 days). We drove straight to our hotel (Gem Resort; \$425 per night for 2 rooms) and checked in before driving to Mount Hartman National Park for our first try for Grenada Dove. We arrived a bit late (after 5 p.m.) and didn't see any doves, although we did hear a couple calling in the forest. And at least we figured out the trails for tomorrow morning. Bird activity was almost non-

existent in the heat, although we did see a Blackpoll Warbler near the visitor center. We had a little trouble finding a good restaurant and finally ended up dining at an Italian place along the main highway in Grand Anse. [clear, temperature 26-34° C, wind E 5-15 mph]

## 10 November

This was our first full day on Grenada and our priority was to try to see a Grenada Dove. We left the hotel at 6 a.m. and headed for Mount Hartman National Park, where we arrived about 6:15 a.m. A quick walk up the trail produced at least 6 singing Grenada Does, but we never got a good look at one despite lots of effort. We also saw Osprey, several Broad-winged Hawks, Mangrove Cuckoo, Grenada Flycatcher, and Lesser Antillean Bullfinch.

At 10:15 a.m. we left the park and drove north to Grand Etang National Park, where we arrived at 11:15 a.m. En route our vehicle began acting up and we nearly lost the brakes by the time we reached the park visitor center and Lake Etang. The birding here was slow, perhaps because we were competing with passengers from a cruise ship, and we managed to see a Snowy Egret on the lake, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Purple-throated Carib, and Grenada



Flycatcher. At 1:15 p.m. we decided to return to town and deal with the vehicle. After a slow and slightly hair-rising drive, we switched vehicles (to a Suzuki Escudo) and then relaxed at the hotel in the mid-day heat. We left again at 3:30 p.m. and checked some ponds near the airport where we saw a Great Blue Heron and some Barn Swallows. We then returned to Mount Hartman National Park at 4:15 p.m. and patiently waited on the hillside, hoping to see a Grenada Dove. Several were calling, and we saw a Mangrove Cuckoo and 2-3 mongoose, but no doves; we hiked out when it got dark at 5:45 p.m. We returned to the same Italian restaurant for dinner and had sushi and pizza. [mostly clear, temperature 26-31° C, wind NW 10-20 mph]

## 11 November

This was our last day on Grenada. We awoke early and moved our stuff to a single room at the hotel, which they graciously offered us until 3 p.m. We left just before 6 a.m. and drove north up the west side of the island. We stopped a couple of places along the highway before we finally found a steady stream of seabirds moving south offshore of Vettle Point. There were hundreds of Brown Boobies plus a few Red-footed Boobies, a Red-billed Tropicbird, 2 Audubon's Shearwaters, and a Sandwich Tern. At 8:45 a.m. we reached the Levera Hill area, where we birded until 10:40 a.m. On the freshwater pond we saw 2 female Ring-necked Ducks and a Sora. In the brackish lagoon to the north there was a single Pied-billed Grebe. We waited patiently hoping for a Hook-billed Kite, but instead saw Osprey, several Broad-winged Hawks, Barn Swallow, and Scaly-breasted Thrasher. From here, we made our way south along the eastern

coastline, eventually returning to Grand Anse. At Lake Antoine there was another female Ring-necked Duck, 11 Ruddy Ducks, many Pied-billed Grebes (including a bird on a nest and a brood), Common Moorhens, and Caribbean Coots. But the real highlight was a pair of Hook-billed Kites soaring on thermals along the ridge just to the north of the lake. Farther south on the beach just south of Grenville we saw Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and 3 Common Terns. We were back in Grand Anse by 1:30 p.m. We decided to book a single room for one more night so that we would have a place to shower and relax before our



7 p.m. departure to the airport, although we had to pay another \$100 for this luxury. We ate a late lunch at Sur la Mer Restaurant next to the hotel and then relaxed and enjoyed some rum punch and wine until 6 p.m. Gordon had a little too much to drink and got his hair braided, much to the enjoyment of the rest of the group! We shuttled the group to the airport in two trips, dropped off our rental vehicle, and were in the airport waiting for our flight by 7:30 p.m. We arrived on time in St. Vincent and were quickly shuttled to the Rich View Guest House in Kingstown (\$475 for 2 nights, breakfast included). [partly cloudy with morning showers, temperature 25-31° C, winds NW 5-15 mph]

## 12 November



This was our only full day on St. Vincent. We awoke at 6 a.m. and the proprietor drove us into Kingstown to get a driver's license and pick up our rental (a SUV from Chubby's Car Rental for \$55); while in town we added our first House Sparrow of the trip. We returned to the hotel and birded for a short time before breakfast was served at 8 a.m. (corn flakes [but no milk], fried plantain, bananas, toast, juice, and coffee). On the ocean we saw many Brown and Red-footed boobies, an Audubon's Shearwater, and a Royal Tern. A wet area along the west side of the airport runway contained a flock of Blue-winged Teal, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, and Greater and Lesser yellowlegs. After breakfast, we left a little before 9 a.m. and headed for Vermont

Forest, where we arrived at 9:15 a.m. We hiked up into the forest (the trail is quite steep in places!) and saw quite a few birds in the vicinity of the observation platform including Common Black-Hawk, St. Vincent Parrot (26+ birds), Lesser Antillean Swift, Purple-throated Carib, Brown Trembler, Whistling

Warbler, Lesser Antillean Tanager, Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, and Antillean Euphonia. The devastation from hurricane Tomas was stark here with many downed trees; most of those still standing were stripped of their leaves. We also had a pleasant visit with the director of the St. Vincent Department of Forestry, who was there to view the hurricane damage.

We returned to Grand Anse by 2:15 p.m. and continued east towards the Brighton Salt Pond. On our way we stopped for lunch at the restaurant Xcape in Villa (I had the curry conch with rice and vegetables). It took us a couple of tries, but we eventually found the trail to the salt pond. However, we were disappointed to hike along the edge of the ocean for a half hour only to learn that the “pond” is nothing more than a crevasse along the ocean edge, hardly a good spot for most waterbirds.

We returned to the beach and in the adjacent lagoon there were hundreds of roosting Cattle Egrets plus a few Little Blue Herons and an adult Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Common Black-Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush. We stayed until dusk at 5:45 p.m. and then returned to the guest house. As we were relaxing on the porch, a couple of cars sped by on a lower road; a few loud pops sounded like an engine backfire. Then we realized that the pops were actually gunshots, and that it was a police car chasing the other car! The evading car soon crashed into an embankment and flipped on its side, where the criminal(s) was quickly apprehended. [partly cloudy, temperature 25-32° C, wind NW 5-15 mph]



### 13 November



This was our last full day of birding. At 6 a.m. some of us walked along the road near the hotel and saw the common seasonal birds including Caribbean and Yellow-bellied elaenias and Blackpoll Warbler. We then drove a short distance east and walked out to the pond near the airport runway where we found a female Green-winged Teal in a flock of Blue-winged Teal plus Sora, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, and Wilson’s Snipe. We returned to the hotel at 8 a.m. for breakfast (bacon and scrambled eggs, corn flakes, toast, fried plantain, bananas, and juice or coffee). After breakfast we relaxed, showered, and packed before catching a 10:30 a.m. shuttle to the airport; our flight to Barbados departed almost 2 hours late at 2:30 p.m. We ate a quick lunch in the airport before we departed. We arrived in Barbados at about 3 p.m., quickly passed through customs, claimed our luggage, and picked up our rental car (a

Toyota mini-bus for \$109.50). With little daylight left, we opted to bird Chancery Road Swamp until dusk. The birding was excellent and we saw a female American Wigeon, a pair of Ring-necked Ducks, 2-3 Little Egrets, a continuing Eurasian Spoonbill, Whimbrel, and several Barbados Bullfinches. Next, we



made our way to the hotel (Time out at the Gap in Dover; \$250 for 2 rooms), checked in, and then ate dinner at the hotel restaurant. [partly cloudy, temperature 26-31° C, winds W 5-15 mph]



**14 November**

Today was a travel day. Jay, Andy, and I left for the U.S. on the 8:15 a.m. flight to Miami while Gordon and George had an early afternoon flight. Everyone made it home safely, except Jay who had opted to stay in Florida for two extra days.

**For more information, please contact:** Stephen J. Dinsmore, E-mail: [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu)

**BIRD LIST (223 species)**

Little Tinamou	White Ibis	Semipalmated Plover
Trinidad Piping Guan	Scarlet Ibis	Black-necked Stilt
American Wigeon	Eurasian Spoonbill	Wattled Jacana
Blue-winged Teal	Black Vulture	Spotted Sandpiper
Green-winged Teal	Turkey Vulture	Solitary Sandpiper
Ring-necked Duck	Osprey	Greater Yellowlegs
Ruddy Duck	Hook-billed Kite	Willet
Pied-billed Grebe	Pearl Kite	Lesser Yellowlegs
Audubon's Shearwater	Long-winged Harrier	Whimbrel
Red-billed Tropicbird	White Hawk	Ruddy Turnstone
Magnificent Frigatebird	Common Black-Hawk	Sanderling
Brown Booby	Savanna Hawk	Semipalmated Sandpiper
Red-footed Booby	Broad-winged Hawk	Western Sandpiper
Brown Pelican	Gray Hawk	Least Sandpiper
Great Blue Heron	Zone-tailed Hawk	Pectoral Sandpiper
Great Egret	Yellow-headed Caracara	Short-billed Dowitcher
Little Egret	Merlin	Wilson's Snipe
Snowy Egret	Bat Falcon	Laughing Gull
Little Blue Heron	Peregrine Falcon	Lesser Black-backed Gull
Tricolored Heron	Clapper Rail	Large-billed Tern
Cattle Egret	Sora	Common Tern
Green Heron	Purple Gallinule	Royal Tern
Striated Heron	Common Moorhen	Sandwich Tern
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Caribbean Coot	Black Skimmer
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Southern Lapwing	Rock Pigeon
	Black-bellied Plover	Scaled Pigeon

Scaly-naped Pigeon	Lesser Antillean Swift	Golden-olive Woodpecker
Zenaida Dove	Fork-tailed Palm-Swift	Lineated Woodpecker
Eared Dove	Rufous-breasted Hermit	Crimson-crested Woodpecker
Common Ground-Dove	Green Hermit	Gray-throated Leaf-tosser
Ruddy Ground-Dove	Little Hermit	Stripe-breasted Spinetail
White-tipped Dove	White-tailed Sabrewing	Yellow-chinned Spinetail
Gray-fronted Dove	White-necked Jacobin	Streaked Xenops
Grenada Dove	Black-throated Mango	Plain-brown Woodcreeper
Red-bellied Macaw	Purple-throated Carib	Straight-billed Woodcreeper
Green-rumped Parrotlet	Green-throated Carib	Cocoa Woodcreeper
Lilac-tailed Parrotlet	Antillean Crested Hummingbird	Great Antshrike
Blue-headed Parrot	Tufted Coquette	Black-crested Antshrike
Orange-winged Parrot	Blue-chinned Sapphire	Barred Antshrike
St. Vincent Parrot	White-chested Emerald	White-flanked Antwren
Squirrel Cuckoo	Copper-rumped Hummingbird	Silvered Antbird
Mangrove Cuckoo	Long-billed Starthroat	White-bellied Antbird
Striped Cuckoo	White-tailed Trogon	Black-faced Antthrush
Smooth-billed Ani	Violaceous Trogon	Southern Beardless- Tyrannulet
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	Collared Trogon	Forest Elaenia
Short-tailed Nighthawk	Trinidad Motmot	Caribbean Elaenia
Common Potoo	Ringed Kingfisher	Yellow-bellied Elaenia
Oilbird	Belted Kingfisher	Ochre-bellied Flycatcher
Chestnut-collared Swift	American Pygmy Kingfisher	Slaty-capped Flycatcher
Short-tailed Swift	Channel-billed Toucan	Yellow-breasted Flycatcher
Band-rumped Swift	Red-rumped Woodpecker	Euler's Flycatcher

Tropical Pewee	Long-billed Gnatwren	Blue-black Grassquit
Yellowish Flycatcher	Cocoa Thrush	Black-faced Grassquit
Pied Water-Tyrant	Bare-eyed Thrush	Red-capped Cardinal
White-headed Marsh-Tyrant	White-necked Thrush	Lesser Antillean Bullfinch
Grenada Flycatcher	Tropical Mockingbird	Barbados Bullfinch
Great Kiskadee	Scaly-breasted Thrasher	Grassland Yellow-Finch
Boat-billed Flycatcher	Brown Tumbler	Red-crowned Ant-Tanager
Piratic Flycatcher	Tropical Parula	Yellow-hooded Blackbird
Tropical Kingbird	Yellow Warbler	Red-breasted Blackbird
Gray Kingbird	Blackpoll Warbler	Carib Grackle
Black-tailed Tityra	Whistling Warbler	Shiny Cowbird
Bearded Bellbird	American Redstart	Giant Cowbird
White-bearded Manakin	Northern Waterthrush	Yellow Oriole
Golden-headed Manakin	Bananaquit	Yellow-rumped Cacique
Red-eyed Vireo	Bicolored Conebill	Crested Oropendola
Black-whiskered Vireo	White-lined Tanager	Trinidad Euphonia
Golden-fronted Greenlet	Silver-beaked Tanager	Violaceous Euphonia
Rufous-browed Peppershrike	Blue-gray Tanager	Antillean Euphonia
Gray-breasted Martin	Palm Tanager	House Sparrow
White-winged Swallow	Lesser Antillean Tanager	
Blue-and-white Swallow	Turquoise Tanager	
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	Speckled Tanager	
Barn Swallow	Bay-headed Tanager	
Rufous-breasted Wren	Blue Dacnis	
House Wren	Green Honeycreeper	
	Purple Honeycreeper	