

Trinidad & Tobago

Naturetrek Tour Report

14 - 27 April 2007



AWC veranda



Red-legged Honeycreeper



Red-billed Tropicbird



Tufted Coquette

Report compiled by Paul Dukes
Photos by Peter Dunn



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SC

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Tour Leader: | Paul Dukes (Naturetrek tour leader) |
| Local Guides: | Jogi Ramlal in Trinidad Adolphus James & Gladwyn James in Tobago |
| Participants: | Bill & Shirley Cook Reg & Janet Davis Max & Barbara Possingham Ian & Gillian Wylie |

Day 1

Saturday 14th April

Shaking off the soporific effects of a trans-Atlantic flight we passed through arrival formalities at Trinidad's Piarco Airport and emerged into a balmy 25 degrees C early evening to be met by a cheery Jogi and the Asa Wright crew. The flight had stopped en route at Georgetown Barbados depositing cricket fans for the World Cup games including 80 intrepid Indians completing the last leg of a long haul from Mumbai just to watch seven days of cricket which no longer involved their home team! Luggage was quickly stowed in the pick-up and we climbed into Jogi's mini-bus for the 45 minute drive to the Centre. Saturday night traffic filled the busy dual-carriageway from Piarco to Arima but after negotiating the outskirts of the town we soon began to climb up into the northern range of hills replacing the noise of the streets with the chirping of frogs and crickets in the forest.

We reached the world-famous Centre and received a welcome rum-punch to revive spirits as a girl from the Reception desk handed out our room numbers. Bags were conveyed to the appropriate locations, followed by the occupants of the rooms then, after the opportunity of a quick wash, we reassembled in the dining hall for a somewhat late buffet dinner. Although still only mid-evening body-clocks were telling us that it was well after midnight GMT and we retired early, but not before meeting Max and Barbara who had arrived at Piarco from Australia (via a stay in America), a little earlier than the rest of us.

Day 2

Sunday 15th April

The night serenade of crickets and cicadas suddenly ceased at about 0530 as the first whistles and squeaks of the birds began and by 0600 the birds were in full voice, House Wren and tanagers leading the dawn chorus.

Made my way on to the veranda at 0545 but was soon followed by other guests as we assembled for the morning performance. It was comforting to note that in the four years since my last visit there seemed to have been few changes apart from replacement night covers for the open front of the veranda and even earlier availability of hot drinks with two urns were already bubbling away nicely as I arrived. At first arrival I removed the screens, permitting the impatient Palm Tanagers which nest inside the veranda to escape from their overnight confinement and join their relatives for breakfast.

Turning attention to the freshly replenished bird tables and hummingbird feeders we found that the night-shift of small fruit bats had been displaced by an ever increasing horde of avian arrivals heralding another 12 hours of veranda entertainment. Fourteen years of visiting Trinidad have not blunted the sense of excitement and anticipation that I felt, sitting with my cup of coffee watching the forest wake up.

First on parade were the immaculate, but pugnacious, White-necked Jacobins, ready to see off intruders from the moment they began sipping the morning sugar solution. Palm Tanagers were soon feasting on the fruit and bread, quickly joined by their White-lined and Silver-beaked brethren, Cocoa & Bare-eyed Thrushes, Crested Oropendolas and Shiny Cowbirds. Swarms of tiny Bananaquits quickly dominated activities around the hummingbird feeders, competing with the jacobins, and White-chested Emeralds for the 'nectar' whilst Black-throated Mango and Copper-rumped Hummingbirds explored the choice of flowers in the garden.

Almost imperceptibly, the late rising honeycreepers arrived and all at once the Bananaquits found their perches filled by a flood of purple and green bodies. These brightly coloured little birds rapidly asserted their presence so that on occasions every port on the feeders was occupied by either a Purple or a Green Honeycreeper with dozens more scabbling to take over a position.

Seven a.m. and it was a riot of activity in front of the veranda. Kiskadee Flycatchers shouted their names, a House Wren poured out his song from the undergrowth, Grey-fronted Doves bustled along the path below the tables and Blue-Grey Tanagers jostled with the other birds for the rapidly dwindling supplies of fruit. Rather more distantly, several Channel-billed Toucans posed for telescope views as they perched in the tree-tops and Orange-winged Parrots screeched their way across the valley.

The ringing of a bell summoned us to our breakfasts in the dining hall but we were anxious not to miss any of the action and were soon installed again for another hour or two on the veranda. Red-rumped Agoutis nervously emerged from the vegetation to scavenge beneath the tables, sharing their spoil with fearsome looking Tegu Lizards and Ruddy Ground Doves. An exotic Blue-crowned Motmot made occasional visits to the table but rarely remained long before melting back into the forest.

A migrant Northern Waterthrush bobbed and flirted its way along the path, Tropical Kingbirds sailed after insects from bush-top perches and a Greyish Saltator added his rather sweet if repetitive song to the morning chorus. Two more hummingbird species appeared, a male Ruby Topaz posing nicely in a Cecropia tree below the veranda and several tiny Tufted Coquettes buzzing like insects from flower to flower. The Ruby Topaz looked almost black when perched in cover but his head glittered yellow and red in the shafts of sunlight.

Other species seen during the morning included Golden-Olive Woodpecker, several Streaked Flycatchers and one or two Piratic Flycatchers giving the Crested Oropendolas a hard time as they attempted to return to their huge pendulous nests. Despite being much smaller than the rightful owners of the nests, the flycatchers are adept at appropriating nests for their own use and are invariably found near colonies of Oropendolas and Caciques subjecting their victims to furious attacks whenever they returned.

When the frenzied activity around the feeders abated slightly as the food was consumed, we seized the opportunity to go for a leg-stretch with Jogi down the Discovery Trail which in bygone days was the principal highway down to Arima. A roosting Ferruginous Pygmy Owl near the picnic area was the first find and sat obligingly for telescope views whilst fixing us with a fierce stare which signalled his resentment at our intrusion.

Finding White-bearded Manakins does not require any subtle field skills, you simply follow the clicking noises of the displaying birds until you reach a sign proclaiming 'White-bearded Manakin lek' and there they are, funny little blue and white bundles of feathers jumping up and down in an insane manner on the forest floor!

Unfortunately the lek was almost deserted with just a few of these endearing birds making a half-hearted attempt at displaying but we resolved to return when the performers were in a more animated mood. Several male Golden-headed Manakins also made brief appearances during the walk but quickly flew off into deeper forest.

The loudest sound of the forest is made by the Bearded Bellbirds which compete with each other in an area helpfully indicated by a large information board although in truth one would have to be profoundly deaf not to be aware that this is where the birds have their 'song' perches. The volume of each call is almost painfully loud, especially when the bird is perched overhead but paradoxically it is no easy task to see the source of the din and it took us a considerable while before everyone eventually managed to obtain decent views. A number of males were present and their explosive trumpeting calls resonated over the forest for most of the day being clearly audible back at the AWC.

After a hearty lunch we sauntered along the entrance road dodging a steady stream of vehicles bringing day visitors to the Centre. Bay-headed and Turquoise Tanagers showed well in the bushes, two species which only rarely come to the feeding station, several Motmots posed obligingly and a Tropical Pewee perched above the road. Several Violaceous Euphonias entertained us as they fussed around the foliage and both Great Ant-Shrike and Cocoa Woodcreeper put in appearances although a confiding male Violaceous Trogon disappeared from open view before I could point it out to the rest of the group.

We chose to ignore the lure of cakes and refreshments on the veranda at 4pm and continued to the entrance barrier where we sat for a while exchanging greetings with the occupants of cars passing on the road and trying to focus binoculars on the various hummingbirds dashing to and fro. As we made our way back to the Centre two Rufous-breasted Wrens surprised us by dust-bathing beside the road, unexpected behaviour from birds more usually heard than seen.

It had been an excellent first day at the Centre and the species seen whetted our appetites for the days ahead. Rum punches sipped on the veranda at 6pm made a perfect aperitif before the ringing of the meal bell summoned us to another fine meal in the restaurant. The Asa Wright blend of birdwatching interspersed with eating had been well and truly established on this introductory day!

A 'bug-walk' later in the evening produced a variety of night creatures for participants including a sleeping Streaked Flycatcher and an impressive Pink-toed Tarantula on the side of a building which made everyone check their own rooms before retiring!

Day 3

Monday 16th April

There was a somewhat cloudier and windier aspect to the Arima Valley at first light but this did not deter the tanagers and hummingbirds which soon began their daily routine as the bird tables were replenished. The veranda was quite crowded with a new influx of guests but this generated some interesting pre-breakfast sightings including a perched Double-toothed Kite on a distant tree, Channel-billed Toucans, a brief visit from a Tropical Parula and a pair of Blue Dacnis flitting around the Oropendola nests.

After breakfast we set off for a day on the north coast travelling in Jogi's mini-bus and a car driven by his smiling companion Charon. The route followed the usual pattern for this excursion, a gradual climb through the

Northern Range forests, stopping from time to time for roadside birding, a descent into the coastal plains bordering the Caribbean, and lunch near the little town of Blanchisseuse.

After a blustery start to the day, the weather did not greatly improve and initial light showers became heavier and more frequent through the day although brighter interludes did occur. As so often happens, it was relatively hard work, and often frustratingly difficult to get views of rapidly moving birds, but gradually we were rewarded with some success and both White-tailed and Violaceous Trogons responded to Jogi's tape although even these showy creatures made life difficult for us before finally offering superb prolonged views.

An American Redstart and a Long-billed Gnatwren were by contrast only glimpsed by a few of the group and Rufous-breasted Wrens were similarly elusive. Other species by the roadside included Orange-winged Parrots, Blue-crowned Motmot, Forest Elaenia and an obliging pair of Boat-billed Flycatchers. Keeping an eye skywards we saw plenty of vultures drifting overhead, one or two White Hawks, a pale-phase Short-tailed Hawk and several elegant Plumbeous Kites.

Not all the forest birds could be seduced into view by tapes and a Black-faced Ant-thrush after showing itself briefly to just a few of the group stubbornly refused to repeat the performance for everyone else and mocked us by calling repeatedly from cover. Fortunately the owner of another distinctive and melodic call nearby was much better behaved and everyone obtained decent views of a male Bright-rumped Attila, a scarce resident of these northern forests and a bird rarely seen on our tours.

After this minor triumph we drove to the summit at Morne Bleu just in time for one of the heavier downpours. There was not much to see by the communications mast but a few Southern Rough-wing Swallows were hawking insects along with several Grey-breasted Martins and it was here that we saw the only Speckled Tanagers of the tour feeding on berries beside the road. Another aerial feeder giving good views as they swooped low in the drizzly conditions were Grey-rumped Swifts.

At most times from the Asa Wright veranda numbers of swifts can be seen feeding over the Arima valley but it can be difficult to see very much detail especially when the birds are flying high. Today the swifts were rocketing past at head height and we could clearly see the characteristic light grey rumps. One or two of the smaller Band-rumped Swift were also present but they were very much outnumbered by the Grey-rumped's reflecting a similar situation in the Arima valley. Sadly there was no sign of any Swallow Tanagers in their usual places and Jogi thought that they were probably late returning from their winter haunts as he had not seen any this season. Also absent was the Common Piping Guan or Pawi which had been observed recently at the summit.

In view of the indifferent weather we decided to continue on to the coast, once again stopping from time to time during the descent. This proved to be quite a successful phase of the drive with opportunist stops resulting in views of Zone-tailed Hawk, Scaled Pigeons and increasing numbers of Black and Turkey Vultures as we neared the Caribbean. Arriving at the coast we found that Blanchisseuse was looking rather deserted and damp but pulled into the usual beach-side car park where Jogi and Charon set out the picnic lunch, a typically tasty Asa Wright Shepherd's Pie with salad and fruit. We ate our lunches with Carib Grackles watching intently for any scraps and numerous vultures soaring overhead. Brown Pelicans were loafing offshore and quite a few Frigates glided menacingly along the coast whilst Short-tailed Swifts arrowed over the top of the wind-swept palms as further entertainment.

A short walk down to a nearby river mouth found the water edge surprisingly filled with picnickers but a few birds were observed here including several Spotted Sandpipers, a lone White-tipped Dove, Striated Herons, Green Kingfisher and Rough-wing Swallows along with Grey-breasted Martins and Short-tailed Swifts.

The return drive to the Asa Wright was also punctuated with frequent stops but not too many rewards between heavy showers although Blue-black Grassquits were new for the holiday as were some Smooth-billed Ani's in the same area of cultivation. A stop for afternoon cakes and a leg-stretch at the usual Blue-headed Parrot site enabled us to watch Yellow-rumped Caciques fussing around their colony and a mixture of small birds but whilst Orange-winged Parrots were raucously in evidence their smaller relatives were not to be seen. Earlier we had glimpsed two in flight over the road but on this first day in the field it would have been difficult for the group to appreciate the faster wing beats, slighter build and higher pitched calls of the Blue-headed when not yet familiar with the commoner Orange-winged. A perched, but very distant, White Hawk was barely more than a white blob in a sea of green but changed position to convince us it was indeed a bird!

When we finally reached the Morne Bleu Radio Masts, the mist-shrouded summit of the hills was deserted and we took the chance to spend a little time seeking the elusive Swallow Tanagers although once again there was no sign of these unusual members of the tanager tribe.

This was quite literally the high-spot of our drive and in no time at all we descended through the forest to reach the AWC in good time for the 6 o'clock serving of rum punches. An excellent, albeit damp day had seen the addition of nearly 20 bird species to our holiday list and a chance for some to write on postcards that they had dipped their toes in the blue waters of the Caribbean!

Day 4

Tuesday 17th April

A day of great variety began in traditional manner with coffee and tea at 6am on the veranda but soon after we left the building to take an early walk along the Chaconia Trail in search of Black-faced Ant-thrush, a denizen of the forest floor which often occurs along this trail. My dodgy impressions of the bird's call may or may not have attracted one to begin calling from amid the leaf debris of the forest floor but I suspect it was responding more to another in the distance. Whatever the explanation the ant-thrush strolled briskly around in characteristic fashion calling every few minutes and some of the party managed to snatch brief views as it perched on a fallen branch. Eventually it strolled right across the path passing within metres but unfortunately not everyone was in a suitable position to appreciate this final surrender and the bird flew off into deep cover.

Returning along the Discovery Trail we were entertained by a fuller complement of White-bearded Manakins, clicking away at their lek, and saw two White-necked Thrushes beside the track. Earlier, a tiny female Tufted Coquette had danced around the flowers in front of the veranda and observations from the building before breakfast included at least four Channel-billed Toucans and all the usual breakfast performers.

Nariva Swamp was our objective for the day, but before reaching Arima we stopped to look at a roadside Yellow Oriole nest and as so often happens when birdwatchers deploy binoculars, several other species were spotted including a soaring Black Hawk and a Yellow-bellied Elaenia.

We eventually reached the dry savannah grasslands at Wallerfield and turned into the Agricultural Research Station to sample the range of new birds in this change of habitat. These came in quick succession as we left the vehicles and wandered a short distance along a farm road bisecting large overgrown fields dotted with occasional tall trees and shelters for the cattle which were grazing in some of the paddocks. As usual, the multiple appearances of new species made it difficult for tour members to know which way to look first as fresh names were called out but eventually everyone managed to get satisfactory views of all the Research Station residents.

Primrose winged Wattled Jacanas were among the first additions followed by noisy Southern Lapwings tending tiny youngsters in the paddocks, White-winged Swallows flying around our heads, flocks of Cattle Egrets stalking around the livestock and some rather mobile Green-rumped Parrotlets. Flycatching Tropical kingbirds were numerous and other birds taking their toll of the insects included a number of dapper White-headed Marsh Tyrants and several Pied Water Tyrants. Small parties of Grassland Yellow Finches roaming the weedy fields came as a surprise to me as this small finch has colonized the area since my last visit but more familiar residents were the smart Red-breasted Blackbirds flaunting their scarlet chests in display.

Overhead literally hundreds of Black Vultures were drifting and spiralling in the morning thermals accompanied by a few Turkey Vultures, whilst at least two Savannah Hawks observed us from tree-top perches. A small stream meandering through a field was being fished by a Striated Heron whilst the muddy edges had attracted Spotted, Least and Solitary Sandpipers. The waterside vegetation was also frequented by one or two Yellow-chinned Spinetails but in contrast to almost everything else this morning these remained hard to see and evaded most of the group.

Eventually the demands of time forced us to return to the vehicles and continue along a loop road which took us into a bushy open area a few kilometres from the main farm complex. Water Buffalo are being bred on the Research Station and on the way we passed some newly born calves tottering around in uncertain fashion while their mothers kept wary eyes on an encircling crowd of Black Vultures looking to snatch the afterbirth scraps.

The area we were heading to is very often the first area populated by newly arrived Fork-tailed Flycatchers but even at our most optimistic we could not have imagined the success we achieved. At first just one bird caused Jogi to stop and this was duly admired through telescopes as it perched in a low bush twenty metres away but as we watched it became apparent that others were adorning fences bordering the field and our constantly revised tally reached over twenty before we moved on. It was quite likely that we had been present for the arrival of these amazing creatures and they made a suitably impressive finale for our visit to Wallerfield. After yesterday's rain it had reverted to a typically hot and sunny day in the lowlands but dark clouds swirling over the escarpment of the northern hills suggested that it was probably less clement at the Asa Wright Centre!

Continuing south after a brief 'comfort-stop' at Vallencia, we reached the coast at Manzanilla Beach and turned into a palm-fringed recreational area beside this long curving Atlantic beach. Jogi and Charon prepared lunch as we gazed out at the breakers, watched in anticipation by a few lethargic dogs laying in the sun.

Today only a few other visitors shared the roomy car park with the Grey-breasted Martins which nest in the buildings and make a visit to the wash rooms an ornithological experience worthy of the \$1 entrance fee collected by some officials at a desk.

Manzanilla is the archetypal Caribbean coastline, a curving strand of palm fringed yellow beach which stretches for many kilometres to the south but the Atlantic breakers are deceptively powerful and several lifeguards were on duty to keep an eye on the handful of swimmers.

Once the delicious lunch had been demolished, and the scabby undernourished dogs provided with their meal of the year (much to Jogi's disapproval), we boarded the mini-buses to complete the final part of the journey to Nariva. To the left of the road coconut groves extended the length of the shore, whilst to our right, a narrower belt of palms bordered the edge of the vast patchwork of forest, bushes and marsh which comprises Nariva Swamp.

Jogi drove slowly along the road looking for birds, much to the annoyance of the various motorists racing along the coast road like trainee Michael Shumachers. It is not conducive to relaxed birdwatching when a car suddenly roars past with a blast of horn and sound system set on maximum but we persevered in the early afternoon heat and saw a few species along the way including a perched Osprey and several Great Egrets foraging incongruously among the palms.

Planned stops further along the road allowed us to look for a few of the mangrove specialities at several places where fingers of marsh extend to the edge of the highway. Highlights here included Plumbeous Kites, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Black-crested Ant-Shrike, Barred Ant-Shrike and a superb pair of Squirrel Cuckoos. Jogi knew of a Pearl Kite nest nearby and we set up telescopes to be treated with fine close ups of these extremely attractive little raptors which stared back at us with apparent indifference. The bulky nest was quite conspicuous and it was surprising to learn that the first breeding record for Trinidad was as recent as 1970. Delightful though the birds were it was now extremely hot making birdwatching an uncomfortable, thirst-inducing activity but fortunately the vehicles were never far away with the all important water supply!

The appearance of a few egrets beside the road heralded our arrival at the main wetland area, although at this time of the year it is something of a misnomer to refer to a swamp as very little water remained and most of the seasonal marsh was now cultivated or filled with swaying grasses. Turning off the main road we followed a road bisecting the 'marsh' giving access to the scatter of fisherman's huts standing on stilts to offer protection during the higher water levels of summer.

It seemed to me that since my last visit even greater areas had been burnt and taken over for cultivation but Jogi assured me that all would revert to marsh after the seasonal rains in June and July. Whatever the future, few waterbirds remained in the dried up ditches but as we toured around we did see many Smooth-billed Ani, typical birds of cultivation, and a small flock of Yellow-hooded Blackbirds. A few Marsh Tyrants and Water Tyrants were catching insects and Wattled Jacanas took advantage of every patch of water remaining.

Looking at his watch Jogi decided it was time to leave for the final stop of the day at Wallerfield but just as his mini-bus headed away those of us in Charon's car spotted a male Long-winged Harrier gliding gracefully over the fields. Frantic waving initially failed to attract Jogi's attention but eventually he turned around and fortunately the harrier remained in view for many minutes, quartering over the marsh then soaring over the coastal palms. This attractive raptor was a welcome sight but it did delay our departure and I wondered whether we would get to our destination in time.

Previously a visit to Nariva would conclude by watching Red-bellied Macaws arriving at their roost in a line of palms near the marsh but in recent times the macaws had been seen in larger numbers at Wallerfield and the plan was to get to the old airfield in sufficient light to see their arrival. Fortunately we had no further delays and even managed to fit in a re-fuelling stop en route.

I had been prepared for big changes at Wallerfield but was still taken aback by the transformation of the area around the old control tower which is now a major building site with construction work underway on creating a new campus and a small industrial park. We entered through a security check-point and skirted our way around the various lorries and JCB's working on the site but the airfield is a big place and at the furthest extremity of the former main runway, an area has been left untouched as a small wildlife reserve. It is here that a stand of Moriche Palms grow and these fruiting palms were the attraction for the macaws.

As we arrived, another group from the Asa Wright Centre was also waiting for the spectacle and our arrival coincided with the first of the macaws which quickly pitched into the top of a nearby palm and presented wonderful views in the evening sun. Further groups noisily arrived and whilst some vanished into the midst of cover others were in less of a hurry and posed perfectly for our groups. In total over 60 birds arrived but we were distracted from counting by the appearance of other interesting species and by the distribution of rum punches from the vans!

A close Yellow-headed Caracara was one of the diversions as were the antics of four or five Sulphury Flycatchers, another of the Wallerfield specialities which showed particularly well this evening. A supporting cast including Fork-tailed Palm Swifts and Yellow-bellied Elaenias rounded off another excellent day which had provided a wonderful selection of birds in a variety of different habitats.

Day 5

Wednesday 18th April

After yesterday's travels a quieter time was in prospect as we spent most of the day around the grounds of the Centre. It was an opportunity for personal exploration, photography or perhaps just to relax on that always inviting veranda. During the course of the morning and early afternoon we walked along the Chaconia, Bellbird and Discovery trails meeting along the way a good selection of species. Highlights included a dozen or so Golden-headed Manakins lekking in trees along the Bellbird trail, Golden-Olive Woodpecker, Tufted Coquette and Ruby Topaz hummers at the Centre and more views of daily favourites such as Great and Barred Antshrikes, Streaked Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrushes and even the ever elusive Bearded Bellbird. The White-bearded Manakins were in good form today with much clicking and fizzing going on in the display area.

Also of note were a number of day-flying sac-wing Bats patrolling forest clearings and the scavenging gang of Agoutis and Tegu Lizards loitering below the bird tables. Some of the group enjoyed chance encounters with birds not yet on the holiday list and in this manner, Grey-throated Leaf-tosser, Plain-brown Woodcreeper and White-bellied Antbird revealed themselves to the fortunate few. Delicious though the picnic lunches had been it was nice to be at the Centre for the real thing today and to chat about the morning's sightings over a leisurely meal in the restaurant with a chorus of exotic bird calls permeating the conversation from the garden. The hot period of the early afternoon was mostly spent on the veranda and in case we were beginning to suffer from food deprivation, savouries and cakes were duly served along with tea and coffee at 4 o'clock. Unable to resist I ate more than I should have done but it seemed a shame to send any back, or at least that was my excuse.

Soon after five Jogi appeared with Charon and we set off back down the hill for another visit to Wallerfield. This time our objective was night birding and once again we were joined at the Moriche Palms by fellow guests from the Asa Wright Centre. A picnic evening meal was set out for both groups with rum punches supplied courtesy of the security guards from the AWC who turned up in a pick-up after it had been discovered that the precious liquid had been left behind. In between mouthfuls of food, we enjoyed yet more lively birding around the Moriche Palms as the macaws arrived in force, a superb Lineated Woodpecker posed perfectly on the trunk of a palm and at least two Moriche Orioles sat in open view, another Wallerfield speciality that we had missed on the previous visit.

As dusk settled the night sounds began and first of these was a Tropical Screech Owl calling behind the picnic site. An attempt was made to lure into view with tapes but it remained frustratingly hidden although clearly not very far away. Fireflies were quick to emerge after nightfall and several different species were flying around emitting pulses of light among the trees.

Climbing into the vehicles we commenced an hour or so driving slowly around the undeveloped portions of the old airfield scanning carefully with a powerful spotlight. At a few places we left the vehicles and went for a short walk beneath a sky now filled with stars. A number of White-tailed Nightjars and Pauraques were seen both in flight and on the ground but no Potoo and eventually we headed back to the Centre at about 9pm. The night birds had obliged one more time but with the end of Wallerfield disappearing under concrete I wonder how much longer the guests at the AWC will be able to enjoy this pleasant evening activity?

Day 6

Thursday 19th April

Our morning excursion was to visit the Aripo and Arena Forests in the lowlands which entailed a 0530 breakfast and 6am departure in order to fit in birding before the intense heat of the day. Everyone was very punctual and before the other guests were tucking into their breakfasts at the usual time, we were enjoying some early morning birding in a weedy overgrown area not far from Wallerfield.

A Striped Cuckoo was calling loudly from a tangle of undergrowth and responded immediately to Jogi's tape, flying up to perch on wires beside the road and permitting prolonged telescope scrutiny. Although a widespread bird, Plaintive Cuckoos can be hard to see and we made the best of these excellent views. Another bird that responded to tapes was a female Black-crested Antshrike which came to within a few metres and eventually perched on the wire almost over our head with crest raised in excitement!

In a garden nearby a Southern Beardless Tyrannulet was leaping about the foliage of a small tree but a large dog behind the entrance gates deterred any closer inspection! Various other birds appeared in the bushes including Yellow-bellied Elaenias and a Barred Antshrike but after drinking our fill of the cuckoo we set off next to another part of Wallerfield, this time the tract of tall trees at the edge of the airfield which provide a belt of cover for forest loving birds. This is always a good spot for birding but is typical forest in that for long periods the trees can seem deceptively quiet then suddenly the place erupts and a mixed feeding flock appears filling the canopy with noise and movement only to quickly subside back to silence. This was the pattern of our observations here with the result that not everyone managed to see all the birds that appeared during the brief moments when several new species were in view at once.

One of the highlights was a male White-winged Becard which showed well if you were standing in exactly the right spot but was otherwise no more than a movement in the canopy! A Rufous-browed Peppershrike was almost in the same category but did eventually remain in view long enough for most to see. Other birds included another Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, more Black-crested Antshrikes and a few White-chested Emerald hummingbirds. Completely unexpected here was a Streaked-headed Woodcreeper which appeared from out of the forest and clung to the bark of a tree near the road before flying off into deeper cover. This is one of the scarcer woodcreepers which I was especially pleased to see as it was a new bird for me! Another fine encounter was with a male White-bellied Antbird which Jogi seduced into perfect view with his tape.

After all this ornithological excitement a refreshment stop was in order and we stopped at the usual place in Comuto opposite a tree which is now rather isolated but is still populated by a small colony of Yellow-rumped Caciques along with their attendant Piratic Flycatchers. The caciques were busy flying back and forth to their pendulous nests and as we sat sipping our drinks in the midday sun, a Common Black Hawk sailed over the distant trees. Jogi disappeared up the road to get a large nail removed from one of the minibus tyres which extended the stop and gave us the chance to indulge in some ice cream purchases and to swap cricket banter with the locals.

Underway again we headed to Arena Forest, which is probably the largest area of forest in the lowlands and fringes the huge Arena reservoir which unfortunately is no longer accessible. It was by now far too late in the day for the forest to be at its best but none the less we finished our morning with more memorable sightings including a pair of Violaceous Trogons, a Plain Brown Woodcreeper, Rufous-breasted Wrens, White-necked Thrushes, White-bearded Manakins and a couple of Plumbeous Kites gliding buoyantly over the trees. A particularly memorable observation was of a White Hawk sunning itself with half open wings on a pile of dead wood at the edge of the forest. Apparently oblivious of us, the hawk remained draped over the wood for some minutes but unfortunately abandoned this spell of sunbathing before I could focus the telescope on it.

Birding over, we sped back to the Asa Wright Centre for another hearty lunch followed by a relaxing afternoon which once again the group spent in different ways, some choosing to catch up on card writing whilst others occupied the veranda. In addition to the now familiar birds showing themselves in the gardens, a Dusky-capped Flycatcher was a new addition to the holiday list and a debatable Olive-sided Flycatcher appeared on a distant dead tree. Later, as cakes and pastries arrived for the guests, we made our way to the waiting vehicles to depart on an evening turtle watching trip to Matura Beach on the east side of the island. After leaving Valencia we entered an area of rather pleasant open countryside with plentiful trees and passed several Plumbeous Kites plus a small flock of Blue-headed Parrots for those travelling in Charon's car.

After collecting a member of the turtle protection organisation in Matura we completed our drive to the isolated beach site and waited for the arrival of the dedicated team of conservationists who spend every night of the egg-laying season guarding these vulnerable, and globally endangered, reptiles. The meal was unpacked and set out in the hut which serves as the centre of the evening activities but no sooner had we begun eating than the radio crackled into life and Jogi received the news that a female Leatherback was already egg laying just a few hundred metres along the beach! It was just after 6pm and still full daylight, which was a remarkable stroke of luck for us which we were not about to waste. Leaving the debris of the meal for the security guards to pack, we departed with some haste and ten minutes later were gathered in awe around a huge female turtle which had completed

excavating a nest chamber in the sand and was now egg-laying, the point at which torches can be used to illuminate the creature and photographs taken. It is a slow process but we were mesmerized by this extraordinary animal and it was a real bonus for the laying to begin before nightfall. To be so close to such an ocean giant is one of the great Trinidad natural history experiences and I could tell from their expressions that everyone in the group was savouring every moment.

Once they begin egg laying, the turtles are unaware of activity around them and thus we were able to stroke her amazingly solid head and neck, touch the rubbery carapace and feel the strength of the immensely powerful flippers, which she used to good effect flicking sand back over the nest chamber when the laying was complete. It was a totally magical, unforgettable ninety minutes and when she finally heaved herself laboriously back into the sea you could sense the relief she must have experienced on feeling the embrace of the waves again.

Elated by this remarkable success we headed back to the mini-buses, arriving back to find the car park full of newly arrived visitors preparing for their own encounters. Everything had gone according to the script this year and we eventually arrived back at the AWC not long after 9pm, an incredibly early return from the turtle beach.

Day 7

Friday 20th April

It was business as usual on the veranda at first light as the denizens of the Arima valley began another day at the Asa Wright bird café. Today the usual throng at the feeders was joined several times by a superb male Red-legged Honeycreeper, possibly the most striking of all these brightly coloured birds. The male Ruby Topaz also made several appearances as did Tufted Coquettes, Copper-rumped Hummingbirds and the constantly bickering Jacobins.

After breakfast we joined AWC guide Cherry-Ann to visit Dunstan Cave, the site of the oilbird colony. The Guacharo trail is quite steep in places and more demanding than some other trails in the grounds but easily negotiable with care and progress is invariably slow as we bird along the way, noting today such species as Streaked Flycatcher and a Grey-throated Leaf-tosser which scattered leaves around with gusto from the side of the track but quickly retreated into the forest.

Safely assembled down in the valley, the group took turns to scramble over rocks to the mouth of the grotto from where the Oilbirds could be viewed. These peculiar nocturnal birds are certainly oddities and it is not surprising that early explorers, on hearing the assortment of shrieks and noises produced by the birds, thought that such caves were inhabited by evil spirits. Surprisingly large birds, the Oilbirds were mostly sitting on ledges at the back of the cave but several flew around as we watched, their long wings and tail giving an almost falcon like silhouette. A partial collapse of the cave roof now allows much more light into the interior, but this doesn't seem to have upset the Oilbirds and simply makes viewing easier than before, particularly when the sun was shining. As always, it was a magical experience and a privilege to share a few moments with these remarkable birds. Viewing has been greatly improved by the construction of a wooden platform which makes things much easier than before.

As the group waited their turn at the cave mouth, a Rufous-breasted Hermit paid regular visits to the clearing and entertainment was also provided by tiny frogs in the pools. The climb back up the trail was enlivened by various birds including glimpses of Golden-headed Manakins, a Plain Brown Woodcreeper following a line of

marching fire-ants and a lovely pair of Collared Trogons perched almost over our heads. The Ferruginous Pygmy Owl showed once again in the picnic area and not far off the Discovery Trail seven or eight male Golden-headed Manakins were busy lekking in the canopy, much to the delight of Reg and Janet who had missed the previous sightings.

The rest of the day passed in sunny relaxation interspersed by pauses to consume food and liquid in generous quantities. This was the last opportunity to enjoy all the facilities of the Centre and we were not about to let it pass! Afternoon observations included a Boat-billed Flycatcher, Tropical Pewee, Great & Barred Antshrikes, Northern Waterthrushes, White-necked Thrush and Yellow Oriole.

Day 8

Saturday 21st April

Our final action-packed day at the AWC began like all the others with the convening of the 6am club on the veranda and the gradual coming-alive of the forest birds. As the tanagers, thrushes and honeycreepers flew in to sample the morning fare on the tables, the veranda Palm Tanagers were on their way back out into the world after a night of confinement behind the shutters! The safe, predator free environment overnight obviously suits the birds but it is always entertaining to watch their antics at first light as they impatiently wait for the shutters to be removed! There was a poignancy about this being our final free show but the performers came and went in their usual manner and a new intake of guests marvelled at their first morning in the stalls as we 'veterans' exchanged knowing glances! Most of the regular visitors appeared at the feeders and the Double-toothed Kite turned up again perched on a tree in the valley.

After breakfast we joined Jogi and Charon at the start of a long day in the field which would involve visits to Waterloo mud-flats, Caroni Swamp and other wetlands on the west side of the island. First stop was at Trincity Water treatment ponds just off the main highway into Port of Spain. These tree-fringed freshwater ponds have a distinguished history of rare bird sightings and always reward even the briefest of stops. Today we quickly made the acquaintance once again of typical wetland species such as Wattled Jacana, White-headed Marsh Tyrant and Pied Water-Tyrant but also noted a number of new birds including Purple Gallinule and Common Moorhens, one of the few old friends from Europe.

A number of Snowy Egrets feeding along the banks were also accompanied by at least one Little Egret, another palearctic bird that has recently colonised the northern Caribbean islands. Spotted Sandpipers in breeding dress and the inevitable Southern Lapwing frequented the waters edge whilst the thick carpets of aquatic vegetation on some of the pools concealed Yellow-chinned Spinetails, a few Yellow-hooded Blackbirds and several Striated Herons. Swirling flocks of White-winged Swallows in company with several Grey-breasted Martins and Rough-wing Swallows were feeding over the water surface, often passing close over our heads as we walked along the causeways separating the pools. A small Spectacled Caiman was also floating in the water on the look out for any creatures passing within range.

Posts in the water were occupied by single Yellow-billed and Large-billed Terns which remained on their perches for most of our visit giving a splendid chance to telescope both of these Neotropical terns which represent opposite ends of the family size scale with the former barely the size of the European Little Tern and the latter sporting a beak like a banana!

Another family 'giant' was the magnificent Ringed Kingfisher which flew over the ponds several times and briefly perched on distant wires where it was furiously attacked by hirundines. Other birds seen, during a better than average visit, included an Osprey and a Fork-tailed Flycatcher flying from bush to bush.

Rejoining the ceaseless streams of traffic on the expressway we continued towards Caroni, pausing briefly by the roadside to watch an impressive mixed flock of Dickcissels and Yellow-hooded Blackbirds feeding on rice grain and seeds spilt by a nearby harvester. Despite partly blocking a fairly narrow road and incurring the wrath of the passing motorists we couldn't pass by this gathering of some 70 blackbirds and 100+ Dickcissels. Whilst the blackbirds are local residents the Dickcissels are migrants which would be departing for North America at any time and the males were ready for the breeding season in smart summer plumage.

We paused briefly at Caroni to use the smart facilities at the information centre then endured the heat and noise of the main road for another half an hour as we made our way to the area know generally as Waterloo, a flat uninspiring stretch of mudflats and fields south of Caroni Swamp but a mecca for shorebirds. First stop at the start of a little jetty was a spectacular moment as we emerged from the vehicles to inspect a dense flock of birds resting on the mud a few hundred metres from the shore.

The flock comprised large numbers of Black Skimmers and summer plumaged Laughing Gulls admixed with about 20 Royal Terns, a few Large-billed and several Lesser Black-backed Gulls. The flock was a fine sight and the actual number present would be made more obvious every so often when a 'dread' would cause most of the birds to take wing and swirl around for a while before settling back again.

As we scanned around the vast expanse of exposed mud we picked out numbers of Great & Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Herons and a few Tricoloured Herons wading about in search for crabs whilst rows of Neotropical Cormorants and Brown Pelicans snoozed on convenient boats. Waders included Hudsonian Whimbrel, Greater Yellowlegs, Semi-palmated Ringed Plover, Turnstone and a few 'peeps' difficult to identify for certainty in the strong sun but probably Semi-palmated Sandpipers. The overall scene was one of continuous activity and looking around it was possible to see some of the skimmers performing their party act over the water and a constant movement of terns and gulls from one spot to another.

It was also very hot and we were glad of a little shade when we moved to our next stop at Waterloo itself. The glistening mudflats near the Hindu Temple at Waterloo were also full of birds and the mixture was much the same with hundreds of egrets and herons scattered over the mudflats, although rather more Tricoloured Herons seemed to be here. A few more waders were noted, including a close Greater Yellowlegs, and in one inlet almost every one of a line of wooden posts was occupied by either a Large-billed or a Yellow-billed Tern. Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons were present in the bay and some distant waders rendered unidentifiable by the strong glare although Grey Plovers were certainly among them.

We had enjoyed great coastal birding but time was marching on and with lunch in mind we headed back to Caroni temporarily entering the madness of the highway for another thirty minute run, this time driving north towards Port of Spain. In complete contrast to the noise and mayhem of the roads it was peace and tranquility back at the Caroni Swamp information centre as we unloaded the picnic lunch and retired to the cool of the building for our meal. Once again it was another tasty triumph from the Centre kitchens and we enjoyed the food in the company of Carib Grackles and a scrawny kitten, both with scavenging scraps in mind.

Other birds were present here at the edge of the mangrove swamp and included a tame Yellow-headed Caracara, two beautiful Red-capped Cardinals and a dainty pair of Common Ground Doves shyly walking across the lawn beside the building.

After the meal we boarded one of James Nandoo's boats for an exploration of the Swamp with his young-looking but confident son in control of the boat. At just before four we set off along the long, straight canal which leads to the beginning of the Swamp, pausing along the way for our youthful captain to point out some of the inhabitants such as the tiny crabs inhabiting the forest of roots, and the Four-eyed Fish, or Anableps, a strange little mud-skipper which can survive on the mud at low tide. Particularly noteworthy bird finds included stunning close-ups of a Straight-billed Woodcreeper posing on a trunk and an equally obliging pair of Green Mangos sitting in open view.

After this brilliant start we could hardly fail and were soon beginning to encounter more herons and egrets amongst the trees as we approached the more open areas, these accompanied by the first few fluorescent Scarlet Ibises. Closer at hand a Green Kingfisher was disturbed by the boat and at several places we found the magnificently named Bicoloured Conebills quietly moving through the waterside foliage. A roosting Common Potoo took more finding but eventually one was spotted and appreciated by all although it looked so like an extension of the tree it was perched in that it was easy to dismiss as a branch. Slightly easier to see was a Cook's Boa curled up among the leaves on a tree near the observation tower which affords views over the swamp for those with a head for heights.

Nosing into the main channel we found large numbers of herons and egrets scattered about, some in the mangroves others on the exposed mud. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were particularly abundant but there were also plenty of Little Blue & Tricoloured Herons, Great & Snowy Egrets. One or two Ospreys were fishing the lagoon but were almost overlooked with so many other distractions.

Eventually we moored alongside other boats to watch the ibis fly-past and this was my cue to distribute cakes and rum-punches. At first there was a rather disturbing lack of action on this clear sunny evening but gradually the influx began and with drinks in hand we settled back to watch flock after flock of ibis, herons and egrets flying over the water to either pitch onto an island ahead of us or continue over the trees to another more distant site. Unfortunately, although plenty of ibises arrived, they were intent on going elsewhere and very few pitched into the main roosting island opposite our mooring. The mangroves were soon filling up with Tricoloured Herons, egrets and Neotropical Cormorants but the dyno-rod Ibises were in short supply although by ten past six a few hundred were probably present. It was a bit of a disappointment when we heard that several thousand were there the previous night but the clearer conditions were obviously encouraging them to stay out longer!

There was no such problem with the herons and as we prepared to head back, along with the other boats, wave after wave of herons and egrets were passing low over the water. Racing back in the gathering gloom we made it back to the jetty in record time, (despite a quick stop to look at a very large Caiman on the bank) and transferred back into the waiting vehicles.

The scarlet of the setting sun, the pink sky and the crimson of the ibises combined together to provide an enduring memory of our visit and a fine climax to a very enjoyable week of Caribbean birding.

Day 9

Sunday 22 April

Down the hill for one last time as we drove to Piarco for an early-morning flight to Tobago. It was sad to wave goodbye to Jogi and Charon, who had been such pleasant company for the week, and also a bit unnerving to be cast out into the big wide world after the security of life at the AWC!

We checked-in with plenty of time to spare and twenty minutes after taking off from Piarco, the Dash-8 aircraft touched down at Crown Point Tobago and we emerged into the morning heat. Predictably, Caribbean Martins flying above the buildings was the first Tobago bird speciality for our list, a noticeably bluer and darker looking bird than the Grey-breasted Martins left behind on Trinidad. At first there was no sign of our guide Adolphus James but we were a little earlier than scheduled and after a short while a coach drew up in front of the almost deserted terminal building driven by the distinctive figure of the veteran Tobago bird guide.

First stop on a hot Tobago morning was the water treatment works at Bon Accord where we spent thirty minutes scanning the pools. About half a dozen Anhingas were sitting around on the banks of the pools and other birds here included summer plumage Laughing Gulls, Spotted Sandpipers, many Eared Doves and more Caribbean Martins. Several Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were slumbering on the concrete, looking very reluctant to move, but a group of White-cheeked Pintail were much more wary, quickly flying off when approached. One or two summer plumaged Lesser Yellowlegs provided a nice size comparison with a Greater. One pool contained Moorhens and Wattled Jacanas in the waterside vegetation whilst Least Grebes bobbed on the open water.

Other birds seen as we strolled around the edge of the pools included several Green Herons (now treated as a separate species to the Trinidad Striateds), Osprey, Short-tailed Swift and a frustratingly elusive bird which I am pretty certain was a Bobolink although it was amazingly flighty. Another rarity that there could be no dispute about was Sand Martin, or Bank Martin as it is known on this side of the Atlantic. At least two, possibly more, were flying around with many Swallows (Barn Swallows) over the roadside marsh at Bon Accord.

We looked briefly at a nearby roadside ditch where a Little Egret was among the fishing Snowy and Great Egrets then drove a short distance to the Hilton Hotel complex beside the main road to Scarborough. When the Hilton was built a few years ago the planners included a few ponds for the wildlife and these are now one of the top Tobago birding sites. We did not see a lot on the ponds apart from more Green Herons, Great Egrets and Moorhens but the entrance to a mangrove trail proved to be very productive with a Red-crowned Woodpecker flying up to a nest hole, Scrub Greenlets and a magnificent Mangrove Cuckoo in the bushes. The latter had been seen by occasional Naturetrek leader Martyn Kenefick the previous day and incredibly appeared on cue exactly where he had described seeing it. This very confiding bird approached to within metres of us as it searched for prey in the low canopy and repeated almost exactly the fine performance it had given to Martin's group.

After this brief birding interlude we re-joined the main road and headed north. One of the mysteries of science is that Tobago is only 21 miles long yet it seems to take forever to get from the south to the north but today the journey did not seem too bad. At last, after passing through various immaculately maintained villages with very British names like Glamorgan and Mount Irvine, we finally reached the viewpoint overlooking Speyside and dropped down towards the coast for one last time.

Idyllic coves and beaches along the way had been populated by a few Laughing Gulls and Brown Pelicans whilst roadside birds had included White-tipped Doves and Orange-winged Parrots in the forested areas. Lunch had been booked at Gemma's Tree House Restaurant beside the beach at Speyside and we arrived to find this popular establishment full of chattering diners. The meal that followed was one of the most enjoyable of the tour enhanced by the superb location and the ambience of the open sided building constructed amid the branches of a big Almond tree. Carib Grackles and a Tropical Mockingbird roamed the tables hovering up any discarded scraps but there was not much left at our table after a huge plate of shrimps had been demolished.

From Gemma's it was just a short drive to the Blue Waters Inn tucked away in a private cove a few kilometres outside the village and as we approached the hotel I could see from the way some tour members were looking at the azure waters of the bay, that swimming would be high on the afternoon agenda! We settled into our beachside rooms and reflected on how pleasant it was to have arrived at our final destination. Bateaux Bay is just about as idyllic a spot as you can wish to find and birds visible from the beach included Laughing Gulls offshore, more distant Brown Boobies and frigates beyond Little Tobago Island, and a dozen or so extremely confiding Turnstone on the sand.

A leisurely walk through the hotel garden, and along the entrance road towards Speyside, produced a typical assortment of Tobago birds including White-tipped Doves, Pale-vented Pigeons, Blue-crowned Motmots and hordes of Chachalacas which seemed to be all over the grounds with dozens loitering near the hotel entrance waiting for food to be put out for them. Following a track that circles around the hillside above the hotel we found a few more species in the bushes including Barred Antshrikes, Scrub Greenlet, White-flanked Ant Wrens and a Yellow-breasted Flycatcher. Several Ruby/Topaz hummingbirds were noted and earlier we had seen a female sitting on her tiny acorn like nest on a branch near the hotel buildings.

Later, sitting at the hotel bar sipping a cool coco-punch with the sound of the waves lapping on the beach, Trinidad already seemed far away. In the moonlight a Yellow-crowned Night Heron was visible standing on the beach and for the next few days this very tame individual was often to be seen here, looking a bit like a gatecrasher denied entrance to the party going on in the bar!

Day 10

Monday 23rd April

The Blue Waters provided an early breakfast for us to facilitate a prompt departure to the Tobago Rain Forest. Despite living at the other end of the island, Adolphus arrived before we had finished eating and we set off for the forest, a drive of about 45 minutes from the hotel. At the wheel was George Beccles, a taciturn but friendly local from Roxborough employed increasingly by Adolphus to drive the coach on excursions.

Children were on their way to school as we passed through the villages, their school uniforms looking pristine for this Monday morning. We were soon climbing away from Roxborough into the Rain Forest Preserve, the oldest forest sanctuary in the Caribbean, as proclaimed on a roadside sign. The densely forested central spine of hills not only forms the geological back-bone to the island but is also the refuge of many interesting birds including the three Tobago specialities we particularly hoped to find; White tailed Sabrewing, Blue-backed Manakin and Yellow-legged Thrush. First stop was Gilpin Trace, a narrow trail through the heart of the forest which can be muddy at times providing a source of income for enterprising locals who hire out wellington boots to visitors with inappropriate footwear!

It had however been quite dry recently and the entrepreneurs had stayed in bed this morning. From time to time however we were passed by crocodiles of tourists being escorted on a 'rain-forest' experience by intrepid guides but whether they enjoyed striding along the trail is a matter of conjecture!

We proceeded slowly, allowing time for the forest birds to reveal themselves but on this hot morning it was quite hard work with long periods of seeing very little. Blue-backed Manakins were almost constantly to be heard, uttering their variety of calls but obtaining views was a different matter and the same was true of Stripe-throated Spinetails which 'peeped' away from the undergrowth at several places. White-necked Thrushes were seen and heard several times along the trail but we had progressed some distance before the fluty tones of a Yellow-legged Thrush proclaimed the presence of this shy forest thrush high in the canopy of a giant tree. With some perseverance we eventually managed to train the telescope on the singing male and could see that as well as sounding distinctly like a suburban Blackbird in full flood, it also looked quite like the familiar British garden bird apart from sporting vivid yellow legs. On the return walk it was still singing in the same area and we also had brief views of a female along the way.

The third member of the Gilpin trio, the White-tailed Sabrewing was initially hard to find although we did see Copper-rumped Hummingbird, White-chested Emerald and Rufous-breasted Hermit in the forest. Inevitably the first Sabrewing finally appeared and obligingly landed on a twig just a few metres above our head after charging backwards and forwards through the forest at astonishing speed. Other sightings followed and when rivals displayed to each other in mid-air the fanned white tail feathers glowed like beacons in the dark canopy. Two other colourful birds nesting in holes beside the trail were the Blue-crowned Motmot and the Rufous-tailed Jacamar. Both were exceptionally confiding as we passed through their territories and provided superb close-up views.

Ignoring the unwelcome attentions of biting insects, we continued along Gilpin Trace until we reached the beginning of the waterfall then retraced our steps back to the road, the return walk being accomplished at a more rapid rate than the outward leg. As always in forest habitats, not all the birds recorded during the morning were seen by all the party but highlights included; Rufous-breasted Hermit, Golden-Olive Woodpecker, Plain Brown Woodcreeper, Chivi Vireo and Rufous-breasted Wren. Non-ornithological encounters included an exquisite day flying moth called a White-tailed Page which looked like an emerald green swallowtail butterfly.

We ate our picnic lunch at the Forest View Point which looks out towards Bloody Bay on the Caribbean coast, offering wonderful views over the great expanses of forest cloaking the hills. The resident cake-ladies were on duty in the look out selling rather tasty home made cakes which everyone took advantage of! Birds were not very active today but many Grey-rumped and Short-tailed Swifts were gliding over the trees, numerous frigates were out in Bloody Bay and occupants of the trees around the picnic spot included Yellow-bellied Elaenias.

After this desultory meal in the hot afternoon sun, we made a gradual descent from the hills, stopping at a lower elevation to walk along another trail leading through the forest. As usual, this less disturbed trail was an excellent site to hear and observe lekking Blue-backed Manakins. Without too much difficulty everyone gained nice views of these delightful little birds which completed our 'set' of colourful T&T manakins. Exploration further along the track did not produce any great surprises but Reg and I were fortunate to be in exactly the right place when a White-throated Spadebill popped into view! For a few moments it perched over the path just a few metres away

but then moved into deeper forest and vanished out of sight. Our luck must have been in because we also had fine views of a Cocoa Woodcreeper before leaving the forest.

Back at the Blue Waters there was time for an afternoon dip for the energetic, or a drink or two in the bar under the pretext of counting the Turnstones!

Day 11

Tuesday 24th April

At 9, we boarded Frank Wordsworth's glass-bottomed boat at the Blue Waters quay and headed out over the reefs to Little Tobago Island. Frank was away somewhere so the guide for our trip was Tyrone who soon demonstrated he had the same line of patter as his boss! Steering across the slightly choppy waters beyond Goat Island, we passed fishing Brown Boobies, a few Brown Noddies and tropicbirds before arriving at Little Tobago where a dry landing was possible on the narrow quay. As we approached along the edge of the island more Brown Noddies were visible on the rocks and a few Bridled Terns were elegantly flying over the waves.

Resisting the temptation to tick the feral chickens which forage in the undergrowth, we climbed up through the forested slopes of the island stopping to look at Chivi Vireos, Motmots and Bare-eyed Thrushes along the way. We paused for breath as the path levelled out and waited for a while at the ram-shackled building which serves a visitor centre, to watch mockingbirds, Blue-grey Tanagers and other small birds coming to drink from bamboo troughs. Sturdy Brown-crested Flycatchers and Yellow-bellied Elaenias also lined up to sip the water.

Time was pressing however and we continued along the last stretch of path to reach the lower of two look-out points. This is usually as far as visitors go but Tyrone was quite happy to get even nearer to the sea and we followed him down a somewhat steep and precarious path to another point just a short distance above the breaking waves. This was an inspired move as the lower elevation opened up views of rocks below the cliffs where Laughing Gulls, Sooty Terns and Brown Noddies were congregating to display and nest. Some of the Sooty Terns were even on the path a few metres in front of us and made perfect subjects for the photographers. In addition to the terns, the vantage position also offered good views of the other Little Tobago seabirds; Brown Boobies, Red-billed Tropicbirds and the sinister Magnificent Frigatebirds. As we scrambled down we passed a couple of juvenile tropicbirds sheltering from the sun amid improvised nests.

Returning to the main path we continued up to the higher viewpoint where a wooden shelter affords some protection from the fierce sun. Here the wider panorama of the cliffs was easier to appreciate as tropicbirds glided past at eye level and boobies circled around the bay. Quite a few Red-footed Boobies were present and a number of well grown young were visible in tree-top nests. Both light and dark phase adults were present although most of the nesting adults seemed to be the paler form. Frigates continued to harass both tropicbirds and boobies especially offshore where the birds were fishing. Another juvenile tropicbird was found a short distance from the shelter and like the birds seen earlier it was almost fully grown and would soon be contending with the frigates in the cruel world beyond its nest!

Caribbean Martins circling around with Short-tailed Swifts over the bay, were shooting past us at head height but defied the reactions of the photographers. The essence of Little Tobago is not the number of species but the overall spectacle of the seabirds in this wonderfully tranquil and picturesque setting with the St. Giles group of islands visible in the distance and the forested hills of the mainland just a few kilometres to the west. We could

easily have spent many more hours on the island but our boat was likely to turn into a pumpkin after midday so we reluctantly set off back to the landing stage, pausing briefly to look at Ruby-topaz Hummingbirds and Brown-crested Flycatchers beside the trail. In reverse of the usual sequence, Tyrone took us back over the coral reef before returning to the hotel.

We were soon over the coral and the clear, shallow water enabled us to have ringside seats for a wonderful show of tropical underwater life with Tyrone giving his own distinctive commentary. Groups of Black Surge wrasse and Creole Wrasse cruised the reef, and like actors crossing a stage, various other species swam into view below the observation glass. Tyrone missed little and rattled off the names like a Caribbean John Motson, as Stop-light Parrot-fishes, Four-eyed Butterflies, Blue Tang and many other exotic fishes made their appearances. Equally amazing were the diverse corals of many different forms and colours which he also identified for us. A huge Brain Coral loomed beneath the boat, contrasting with Fire Coral, Pillar Coral, Dead Man's Fingers and the rare towers of Black Coral. Giant Clam Sponges completed a whistle-stop introduction to the Angel Reef and whetted the appetite for any of the group wishing to try some snorkelling. A big surprise during the Reef tour was the very brief appearance of a Hawksbill Turtle swimming past underneath the boat, by no means a regular sight on these excursions.

After a protracted lunch-break, during which some of the group went swimming, we ambled down to Speyside for some leisurely birdwatching. A pair of Grey Kingbirds were watched fussing around an untidy nest on a telegraph post and several Black-faced Grassquits hopped around beside the path. Other sightings included Yellow-bellied Elaenias, House Wrens, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Pale-vented and White-tipped Doves.

Reaching the beach, we found a Green Heron fishing a pool left by the tide and in the same area were entertained in succession by an immature Little Blue Heron, Laughing Gulls, summer plumage Spotted Sandpipers and a lone Semipalmated Ringed Plover. A dead Flying Fish on the beach enabled us to have a closer inspection of a species that hitherto we had only encountered as part of the Blue Water's daily menu! At the evening log, which we conducted each evening in the TV lounge behind the beach bar, it was discovered that a new maximum had been recorded for the Blue Water's Turnstone flock—an impressive 26! These long distance travellers face a long journey to their Arctic breeding grounds but for the moment seemed very happy to be roaming a Caribbean beach.

Day 12

Wednesday 25th April

Forsaking the counter-attractions of Bateaux Bay most of the group joined Gladwyn James for a second visit to the rain forest. It was a windy and slightly damp morning but it didn't stop the Chachalacas making their usual din at first light, gathering momentum into a cacophony of noise as one bird answered another. There is no need for alarm clocks when you live by these strange birds.

As we headed towards Roxborough a flock of Green-rumped Parrotlets by the roadside brought us to a sudden stop and we enjoyed our best views of these pretty little parrots which had been uncharacteristically elusive at Wallerfield. A stop had also been made at the beginning of the Blue Waters road to enable everyone to see the pair of Grey Kingbirds obligingly still near their nest.

Gilpin Trace was once again busy with crocodiles of tourists being shown the 'forest experience' but we made our way at a slower pace and saw most of the species from our previous visit including Sabrewings, Yellow-legged Thrush, Cocoa and Plain Brown Woodcreepers. At least one Ochre-bellied Flycatcher was chasing insects in the canopy and neck-craning was also necessary to see a pair of Great Black Hawk's soaring over the forest. Another holiday 'tick' was Giant Cowbird which we found along the Roxborough Valley trail along with Red-crowned Woodpeckers and a Streaked Flycatcher.

During the lunch break at the Bloody Bay lookout we were entertained by several Red-legged Honeycreepers in the trees and at least three Broad-winged Hawks glided north over the forested hills. An afternoon walk along the Manakin trail produced more views of the Blue-backed Manakins and for most of the group, reasonable views of an Olivaceous Woodcreeper moving from trunk to trunk. Unfortunately the spadebill chose not to perform for a larger audience.

We returned to the Blue Waters mid-afternoon and the remainder of the day was spent relaxing around the hotel or pottering about the grounds. As always there were plenty of birds to look at including more Black-faced Grassquits, Pale-vented Pigeons and the inevitable Chachalacas. Out at sea, boobies, frigates and tropicbirds were just about visible feeding in the rougher waters beyond Goat Island. Our stay was coming to an end but we had plenty of memories to take home and plenty of photographs to remind us all of these delightful islands

Day 13

Thursday 26th April

After a final relaxed breakfast we said goodbye to the Turnstones and our Australian friends Barbara and Max who were travelling later in the day. With two new drivers, one of them Gladwyn's brother, we began the drive through the morning heat to Crown Point which we reached in good time for our Tobago Express flight to Trinidad. Allowing for Caribbean delays I had deliberately opted for a long connecting time at Piarco and as a consequence we had hours to kill at the airport before finally boarding a British Airways Boeing 777 for the return journey to London Gatwick. Banners were being unfurled at Piarco to welcome home local hero Brian Lara but if he arrived while we were there he didn't pop by to say hello!

An overnight flight is never a particularly enjoyable experience but after a brief stop in Barbados to pick up numbers of very pink holidaymakers, we sped smoothly across the Atlantic and reached Gatwick by early morning. I thought it had been a great tour and would like to thank everyone for your patience and good humour. I hope to see you all again one day. The above report is inevitably a subjective account of the tour so please accept my apologies for any omissions or inaccuracies!!!

Species Lists

Birds - Figures in parenthesis - number of days seen

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Little Tinamou | <i>Crypturellus soui</i> | Chick seen in a box at AWC having been picked up in the road on 18th |
| Least Grebe | <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i> | c20 Bon Accord Tobago |
| Red-billed Tropicbird | <i>Phaethon aethereus</i> | Offshore from Blue Waters & many Little Tobago island where several nests seen with young. |
| Brown Booby | <i>Sula leucocaster</i> | Offshore from Blue Waters & many Little Tobago Island + nests |
| Red-footed Booby | <i>S. sula</i> | 20+ Little Tobago Island inc. several nesting birds + juveniles |
| Brown Pelican | <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> | (5) Small numbers offshore from coastal points on Trinidad with larger numbers Waterloo- Seen daily Tobago in small numbers |
| Neotropic Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i> | c100 Waterloo & Caroni |
| Anhinga | <i>Anhinga anhinga</i> | 10+ Bon Accord Tobago |
| Magnificent Frigatebird | <i>Fregata magnificens</i> | (5) c10 Blanchisseuse, locally numerous Tobago especially Little Tobago Island, Bloody Bay & offshore from Blue Waters |
| Great Egret | <i>Egretta alba</i> | (3) Scattering on Trinidad wetlands with 10+ Nariva & Waterloo, numerous Caroni, several Tobago |
| Little Egret | <i>E. garzetta</i> | One Trincity Pond, one Bon Accord |
| Snowy Egret | <i>E. thula</i> | (2) Nariva, Waterloo & Trincity/Caroni on Trinidad & Bon Accord Tobago |
| Little Blue Heron | <i>E. caerulea</i> | (4) Wallerfield, Nariva, Waterloo, Trincity & Caroni on Trinidad, a few Tobago inc immature Speyside |
| Tricoloured Heron | <i>E. tricolor</i> | (2) 1-2 Waterloo, Wallerfield, Caroni (numbers at dusk) on Trinidad |
| Cattle Egret | <i>Bulbulcus ibis</i> | (8) Common in lowlands |
| Green Heron | <i>Butorides virescens</i> | 10+ Bon Accord/Hilton Ponds Tobago, 1 Speyside |
| Striated Heron | <i>B. striatus</i> | (3) 5-6 birds Trinidad, most Trincity |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> | 5+ Waterloo |
| Yellow-crowned Night Heron | <i>N. violacea</i> | Many Caroni, more on Tobago with 5+ Bon Accord and one daily Blue Waters |
| Scarlet Ibis | <i>Eudocimus ruber</i> | 500+ Caroni Swamp |
| Black Vulture | <i>Coragyps atratus</i> | (6) Very Common Trinidad |
| Turkey Vulture | <i>Cathartes aura</i> | (7) Locally numerous Trinidad |
| Black-bellied Whistling Duck | <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i> | 10+ Bon Accord |
| White-cheeked Pintail | <i>Anas bahamensis</i> | 6+ Bon Accord Tobago |
| Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> | (8) Total of c8 birds on Trinidad all coastal |
| Grey-headed Kite | <i>Leptodon cayanensis</i> | One seen on 16 th |
| Pearl Kite | <i>Gampsonyx swainsonii</i> | Adults at nest near Nariva |
| Double-toothed Kite | <i>Harpagus bidentatus</i> | One on two occasions AWC |
| Plumbeous Kite | <i>Ictinia plumbea</i> | (3) Blanchisseuse Road, Arena & en route Matura Beach |
| Long-winged Harrier | <i>Circus biffoni</i> | Male Nariva |
| White Hawk | <i>Leucopternis albicollis</i> | (2) Two Blanchisseuse Road & one Arena Forest |
| Grey Hawk | <i>Asturina nitida</i> | (2) One 16 th & one 17 th |
| Common Black Hawk | <i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i> | (2) Just two near Arima and one Comuto |
| Great Black Hawk | <i>B. urubitinga</i> | Two over Tobago Rain Forest |
| Savannah Hawk | <i>B. meridionalis</i> | Several Wallerfield (ARS) |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Short-tailed Hawk | <i>Buteo brachyurus</i> | One Blanchisseuse Road |
| Zone-tailed Hawk | <i>B. albonotatus</i> | Two en route Blanchisseuse |
| Yellow-headed Caracara | <i>Milvago chimachima</i> | (3) Several around lowlands (Wallerfield & Nariva) |
| Rufous-vented Chachalaca | <i>Ortalis ruficauda</i> | Widespread and locally common Tobago |
| Purple Gallinule | <i>Porphyryula martinica</i> | Several Trincity Ponds |
| Moorhen | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | Several Trincity Ponds & c10 Bon Accord |
| Southern Lapwing | <i>Vanellus chilensis</i> | (5) Locally numerous in Trinidad lowlands-several Tobago |
| Grey Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | Several Waterloo |
| Semi-palmated Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i> | 10+ Waterloo- a few Caroni, one Speyside |
| Wattled Jacana | <i>Jacana jacana</i> | (5) Fairly numerous Nariva, also Wallerfield, Trincity Ponds & Bon Accord Tobago |
| Greater Yellowlegs | <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i> | Several Waterloo & 1-2 Bon Accord Tobago |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | <i>T. flavipep)</i> | Several Bon Accord Tobago |
| Solitary Sandpiper | <i>T. solitaria</i> | One ARS Wallerfield |
| Spotted Sandpiper | <i>Actitis macularia</i> | (4) Ones and twos at a number of localities |
| Hudsonian Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | 10+ Waterloo, two Tobago |
| Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | (5) Waterloo & Caroni but also up to 26 daily Blue Waters |
| Semi-palmated Sandpiper | <i>Calidris pusilla</i> | Several Waterloo |
| Least Sandpiper | <i>C. minutilla)</i> | Single at ARS Wallerfield |
| Laughing Gull | <i>Larus atricilla</i> | (5) Common at Waterloo and around Tobago coast |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | <i>L. fuscus</i> | 3+ Waterloo |
| Royal Tern | <i>S. maxima</i> | 10+ Waterloo |
| Yellow-billed Tern | <i>S. superciliaris</i> | One Trincity Ponds, numerous Waterloo |
| Large-billed Tern | <i>Phaetusa simplex</i> | One Trincity Ponds, many Waterloo |
| Black Skimmer | <i>Rynchops niger</i> | c.200+ Waterloo |
| Brown Noddy | <i>Anous stolidus</i> | 20+ Little Tobago |
| Sooty Tern | <i>Sterna fuscata</i> | Many Little Tobago |
| Bridled Tern | <i>S. anaethetus</i> | Several Little Tobago |
| Pale-vented Pigeon | <i>Columba cayennensis</i> | Numerous & widespread Tobago |
| Scaled Pigeon | <i>C. speciosa</i> | (4) 3 Blanchissuse Road |
| Eared Dove | <i>Zenaida auriculata</i> | Numerous in south of Tobago & Caroni |
| Common Ground Dove | <i>Columbina passerine</i> | Two Caroni |
| Ruddy Ground-Dove | <i>Columbina talpacoti</i> | (8) Widespread & numerous |
| White-tipped Dove | <i>Leptotila verreauxi</i> | (5) Numerous throughout Tobago, one Blanchissuse |
| Grey-fronted Dove | <i>L. rufaxilla</i> | (7) Several daily AWC |
| Red-bellied Macaw | <i>Ara manilata</i> | 60+ Wallerfield Moriche area |
| Green-rumped Parrotlet | <i>Forpus passerinus</i> | (2) c4 Wallerfield, c12 Tobago by coast road |
| Lilac-tailed Parrotlet | <i>Touit batavica</i> | A few at AWC in flight only) |
| Blue-headed Parrot | <i>Pionus menstruus</i> | Two Blanchisseuse Road, 20+ beside road to Matura |
| Orange-winged Parrot | <i>Amazona amazonica</i> | (10) Widespread and numerous in forested areas on both islands |
| Squirrel Cuckoo | <i>Piaya cayana</i> | Two near Nariva |
| Striped Cuckoo | <i>Tapera naevia</i> | Seen well Wallerfield |
| Mangrove Cuckoo | <i>Coccyzus minor</i> | One, Hilton Hotel Mangroves Tobago |
| Smooth-billed Ani | <i>C. ani</i> | (8) Numerous in cultivated or grassy areas on both islands |
| (Tropical Screech Owl | <i>Otus choliba</i> | One heard Wallerfield) |
| Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl | <i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i> | Heard most nights at AWC and during day at several other places. Seen on three occasions at AWC by day |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Common Pauraque | <i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i> | Apparently seen during night-birding at Wallerfield |
| White-tailed Nightjar | <i>Caprimulgus cayennensis</i> | Quite numerous at Wallerfield during night-birding |
| Common Potoo | <i>Nyctibius griseus</i> | One Caroni Swamp |
| Oilbird | <i>Steatornis caripensis</i> | Dunstan Cave colony viewed during stay at AWC |
| Short-tailed Swift | <i>Chaetura brachyuran</i> | (7) Locally numerous both islands but usually near coasts |
| Band-rumped Swift | <i>C. spinicauda</i> | (3) Several identified among commoner Grey-rumped at AWC & Arima Valley |
| Grey-rumped Swift | <i>C. cinereiventris</i> | (10) Commonest swift Trinidad and also Tobago Rain Forest |
| Fork-tailed Palm Swift | <i>Reinarda squamata</i> | Wallerfield |
| Rufous-breasted Hermit | <i>Glaucis hirsute</i> | (2) Glimpsed AWC(Dunstan Cave) & Blanchisseuse Road but more numerous Tobago Rain Forest |
| Green Hermit | <i>Phaethornis guy</i> | Singles on first day at AWC only seen by PAD |
| Little Hermit | <i>P. longuenareus</i> | Single on one day at AWC |
| White-tailed Sabrewing | <i>Campylopterus curvipennis</i> | 5+ Tobago Rain Forest |
| White-necked Jacobin | <i>Florisuga melivora</i> | (10) A common resident at AWC, a few elsewhere in Northern Range also several Tobago Rain Forest. |
| Green-throated Mango | <i>Anthracoceros viridigula</i> | Two Caroni Swamp |
| Black-throated Mango | <i>A. nigricollis</i> | (7) A few daily at AWC and a few sightings elsewhere –nest shown to us at Roxborough school Tobago |
| Ruby Topaz | <i>Chrysolampis mosquitus</i> | (7) Male several times at AWC seen daily Tobago |
| Tufted Coquette | <i>Lophornis ornat</i> | (6) Females seen daily at AWC & male on four occasions |
| Blue-chinned Sapphire | <i>Chlorestes notatus</i> | (4) One or two daily at AWC |
| White-chested Emerald | <i>Amazilia chionopectus</i> | (6) Numerous at AWC, some noted elsewhere (Wallerfield) |
| Copper-rumped Hummingbird | <i>A. tobaci</i> | (8) Widespread on both islands |
| White-tailed Trogon | <i>Trogon viridis</i> | One Blanchisseuse Road |
| Violaceous Trogon | <i>T. violaceus</i> | (3) AWC & Arena Forest (pair) |
| Collared Trogon | <i>T. collaris</i> | Pair AWC |
| Blue-crowned Motmot | <i>Momotus momota</i> | (12) Regularly seen at AWC, widespread and seen daily Tobago at Blue Waters, Rain-forest etc. |
| Ringed Kingfisher | <i>Ceryle torquata</i> | One Trincity Ponds |
| Green Kingfisher | <i>Chloroceryle americana</i> | (2) Blanchisseuse Road & Caroni |
| Rufous-tailed Jacamar | <i>Balbula ruficauda</i> | (4) Blanchisseuse Road, Tobago Rain Forest & roadside in Tobago |
| Channel-billed Toucan | <i>Ramphastos vitellinus</i> | 4-5 AWC grounds |
| Red-crowned Woodpecker | <i>Melanerpes rubricapillus</i> | One at nest hole Hilton Ponds Tobago, 3-4 Roxborough Valley Trail |
| Golden-olive Woodpecker | <i>Piculus rubiginosus</i> | (5) 1-2 AWC, also several Tobago Rain Forest |
| Lineated Woodpecker | <i>Dryocopus lineatus</i> | (6) Two Wallerfield Moriche area |
| Pale-breasted Spinetail | <i>Synallaxis albescens</i> | Two Nariva |
| Stripe-breasted Spinetail | <i>S. cinnamomea</i> | Tobago Rain Forest |
| Yellow-chinned Spinetail | <i>Certhiopsis cinnamomea</i> | ARS, Nariva & Trincity Ponds |
| Grey-throated Leafosser | <i>Sclerurus albigularis</i> | One showed well AWC on two days |
| Plain Brown Woodcreeper | <i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i> | (5) Singles AWC, several Tobago Rain Forest |
| Straight-billed Woodcreeper | <i>Xiphorhynchus pica</i> | One Caroni Swamp |
| Streaked Headed Woodcreeper | <i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i> | One Wallerfield |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Cocoa Woodcreeper | <i>X. susurrans</i> | (5) Heard more than seen but good views of birds on both islands |
| Great Ant-Shrike | <i>Taraba major</i> | (5) Daily at AWC where often around bird tables |
| Black-crested Ant-Shrike | <i>Sakesphorus canadensis</i> | (2) 4-5 birds at Nariva, Wallerfield and Caroni |
| Barred Ant-Shrike | <i>Thamnophilus doliatus</i> | (8) Daily at AWC and 1-2 Wallerfield Several Tobago esp. Blue Waters area |
| White-fringed Ant-Wren | <i>Formicivora grisea</i> | (4) 5-6 birds Tobago (Blue Waters etc) |
| White-bellied Antbird | <i>Myrmeciza longipes</i> | Male Wallerfield and one seen AWC |
| Black-faced Ant-Thrush | <i>Formicarius analis</i> | Heard daily AWC, one seen beside Chaconia Trail, one glimpsed by some beside Blanchisseuse Road |
| Southern Beardless Tyrannulet | <i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i> | Arima Valley & Wallerfield |
| Forest Elaenia | <i>Myiopagis gaimardii</i> | Two Blanchisseuse Road |
| Yellow-bellied Elaenia | <i>Elaenia flavogaster</i> | Fairly numerous Wallerfield; seen daily Tobago mostly around Blue Waters |
| Ochre-bellied Flycatcher | <i>Mionectes oleagineus</i> | 1-2 Gilpin Trace |
| Yellow-breasted Flycatcher | <i>Tolmomyias flaviventris</i> | (2) Singles Wallerfield & near Blue Waters |
| White-throated Spadebill | <i>Platyrrhinus mystaceus</i> | One Tobago Rain Forest |
| Tropical Pewee | <i>Contopus cinereus</i> | Four singles AWC & Northern Hills |
| Pied Water-Tyrant | <i>Fluvicola pica</i> | Fairly numerous in Trinidad lowlands near water |
| White-headed Marsh-Tyrant | <i>Arundinicola leucocephala</i> | Fairly numerous in Trinidad lowlands near water |
| Bright-rumped Attila | <i>Attila spadiceus</i> | Male Blanchisseuse Road |
| Fork-tailed Flycatcher | <i>Tyrannus savanna</i> | c20 ARS, single Trincity Ponds |
| Dusky capped Flycatcher | <i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i> | One AWC |
| Brown-crested Flycatcher | <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i> | Single Nariva; 4-5+ Tobago |
| Great Kiskadee | <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i> | (6) Common AWC & widespread Trinidad |
| Boat-billed Flycatcher | <i>Megarhynchus pitangua</i> | Pair Blanchisseuse Road & 1-2 AWC |
| Streaked Flycatcher | <i>Myiodynastes maculates</i> | (3) Up to 4+ AWC also seen Blanchisseuse Road & Roxborough Valley Tobago |
| Piratic Flycatcher | <i>Legatus leucophalus</i> | (7) AWC, Arima Valley & Cumoto |
| Sulphury Flycatcher | <i>Tyrannopsis sulphurea</i> | 5+ seen very well Wallerfield |
| Tropical Kingbird | <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i> | (10) Locally numerous Trinidad, 4-5 Tobago |
| Grey Kingbird | <i>T. dominicensis</i> | 4-6 birds Tobago |
| White-winged Becard | <i>Pachyramphus polychopterus</i> | Male Wallerfield |
| (Black-tailed Tityra | <i>Tityra cayana</i> | (4) One AWC PAD only) |
| Bearded Bellbird | <i>Procnias averano</i> | Heard daily at AWC and seen very well |
| White-bearded Manakin | <i>Manacus manacu</i> | Seen daily at AWC, also seen at Wallerfield |
| Blue-backed Manakin | <i>Chiroxiphia pareola</i> | Nice views Tobago Rain Forest |
| Golden-headed Manakin | <i>Pipra erythrocephal</i> | (3) Seen well AWC-up to 10+ lekking |
| Scrub Greenlet | <i>Hylophilus flavipes</i> | 5-6 seen Tobago (Hilton Ponds & Blue Waters area) |
| Rufous-browed Peppershrike | <i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i> | Two Wallerfield, one AWC |
| Chivi Vireo | <i>Vireo chivi</i> | Gilpin Trace |
| Caribbean Martin | <i>Progne dominicensis</i> | Numerous Tobago |
| Grey-breasted Martin | <i>P. chalybea</i> | (4) Fairly numerous lowland Trinidad & Northern Hills |
| White-winged Swallow | <i>Tachycineta albiventer</i> | (3) Numerous lowland Trinidad (ARS-Trincity) |
| Southern Rough-Wing Swallow | <i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i> | (4) 20+ birds Trinidad |
| Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | 10+ Bon Accord Tobago |
| Sand Martin | <i>Riparia riparia</i> | 2 maybe 3 Bon Accord Tobago |
| Rufous-breasted Wren | <i>Thryothorus rutilus</i> | (5) 6+ both islands (mostly AWC & Gilpin Trace) |
| House Wren | <i>Troglodytes aedon</i> | (9) Regular daily at AWC, a few Speyside/Blue Waters Tobago |
| Long-billed Gnatwren | <i>Ramphocaenus melanurus</i> | One Blanchisseuse Road, heard AWC |
| Yellow-legged Thrush | <i>Platycichla flavipes</i> | 3-4 Tobago Rain Forest |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Cocoa Thrush | <i>Turdus fumigatus</i> | (8) Numerous Trinidad |
| Bare-eyed Robin | <i>T. nudigenis</i> | (10) Fairly numerous AWC, small numbers Tobago |
| White-necked Thrush | <i>T. albicollis</i> | (7) Several AWC- fairly numerous Tobago Rain Forest |
| Tropical Mockingbird | <i>Mimus gilvus</i> | (9) Fairly numerous both islands |
| Tropical Parula | <i>Parula pitiayumi</i> | One seen AWC others heard |
| American Redstart | <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i> | 1 Blanchisseuse Road |
| Northern Waterthrush | <i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i> | (8) 1-2 most days AWC others seen on excursions esp. Caroni |
| Bananaquit | <i>Coereba flaveola</i> | (11) abundant-both islands |
| Bicoloured Conebill | <i>Conirostrum bicolor</i> | 3-4 Caroni Swamp |
| White-lined Tanager | <i>T. rufus</i> | (10) Numerous both islands |
| Silver-beaked Tanager | <i>Ramphocelus carbo</i> | Common AWC |
| Blue-Grey Tanager | <i>Thraupis episcopus</i> | (10) Common AWC also numbers seen elsewhere in Trinidad and on Tobago |
| Palm Tanager | <i>T. palmarum</i> | (11) Common both islands |
| Violaceous Euphonia | <i>Euphonia violacea</i> | (6) Fairly numerous AWC |
| Speckled Tanager | <i>Tangara guttata</i> | Two Blanchisseuse Road |
| Turquoise Tanager | <i>T. Mexicana</i> | (2) Small numbers AWC |
| Bay-headed Tanager | <i>T. gyrola</i> | (2) Small numbers AWC |
| Blue Dacnis | <i>Dacnis cayana</i> | A pair AWC |
| Green Honeycreeper | <i>Chlorophanes spiza</i> | (8) Seen daily at AWC |
| Purple Honeycreeper | <i>Cyanerpes caeruleus</i> | (8) Numerous at AWC feeders |
| Red-legged Honeycreeper | <i>C. cyaneus</i> | Male at AWC feeders, Several Tobago Rain Forest |
| Dickcissel | <i>Spiza americana</i> | c100 near Caroni |
| Blue-Black Grassquit | <i>Volatinia jacarina</i> | (4) Locally numerous Trinidad lowlands |
| Black-faced Grassquit | <i>Tiaris bicolor</i> | 3-4 Tobago (Blue Waters/Speyside) |
| Grassland Yellow Finch | | 20+ ARS Wallerfield |
| Red-capped Cardinal | <i>Paroaria gularis</i> | Pair Caroni |
| Greyish Saltator | <i>Saltator coerulescens</i> | One or two most days AWC |
| Red-breasted Blackbird | <i>Sturnella militaris</i> | Wallerfield area |
| Yellow-hooded Blackbird | <i>Agelaius icterocephalus</i> | Trincity Ponds, Nariva & Caroni |
| Carib Grackle | <i>Quiscalus lugubris</i> | Numerous around Trinidad coast & south Tobago |
| Shiny Cowbird | <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i> | (10) Locally numerous both islands |
| Giant Cowbird | <i>M. oryzivora</i> | (6) 5+ Roxborough Valley Trail Tobago |
| Moriche Oriole | <i>Icterus chryscephalus</i> | Two Wallerfield |
| Yellow Oriole | <i>I. nigrogularis</i> | (7) A few AWC - also Arima Valley |
| Yellow-rumped Cacique | <i>Cacicus cela</i> | Colony Comuto also along Blanchisseuse Road |
| Crested Oropendola | <i>Psarocolius decumanus</i> | (11) Numerous AWC, seen elsewhere in Trinidad & in small numbers Tobago Rain Forest & Little Tobago |

Non-ornithological

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Red-rumped Agouti | Red-tailed (Trinidad) Squirrel |
| White-lined Sac-wing Bat | Tegu Lizard |
| Cook's Tree Boa (Caroni) | Spectacled Caimen |
| Leatherback Turtle (Matura) | Hawksbill Turtle (Blue Waters) |
| Analeps (Four-eyed) Fish Caroni | Pink-toed Tarantula |
| Land Crab spp | Fiddler Crab spp |