

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

April 11-20, 2008



Ridgway's Hawk
D. Ascanio

Leaders: David Ascanio and Kate Wallace
Compiled by: David Ascanio

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, inc.
2525 Wallington Drive, Suite 1003
Austin, TX 78746
www.ventbird.com

The Dominican Republic

April 12-20, 2008

Leaders: David Ascanio and Kate Wallace

Compiled by David Ascanio



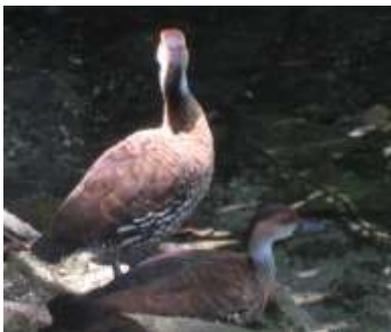
Island biogeography has been a fascinating topic among naturalists and scientists for decades. Terms like geographic isolation, ice age, tectonic plates and elevation are indeed forces that shaped what we see today in Hispaniola avifauna: an incredible number of endemic bird species. As you may have noticed, from the beginning of the tour we were exposed to endemic birds, from the conspicuous Palmchat (endemic family!) to the diminutive todys. In fact, it seemed like there was a chance for a new endemic species every day.

During the length of this trip we learned that some of those endemic birds were incredibly common and widespread (i.e. Hispaniolan Woodpecker), while others were quite restricted to some type of habitat or elevation (i.e. LaSelle Thrush). Furthermore, some of the widespread species were locally common (i.e. Hispaniola Parakeet) while few others were scarce and very difficult to see (i.e. Bay-breasted Cuckoo). The study of the phenomena of abundance and richness of species in isolated regions is a relatively fresh topic, so the chance of finding something new or peculiar is never forbidden. Just look at the comment about the sighting of Gray Heron and you will know what I mean!

Another term to bear in mind when birding in islands is *Niche*. In areas where there is high richness (i.e. Amazonas, Orinoco or the Andes) you're likely to find small *niche* for many species as they must specialize in order to survive. But this story is not the same when referring to islands. Here you can find one species occupying several habitat types, thus having an ample *niche*. A good example were the Palmchat and Red-legged Thrush, both occurring in forested and unforested areas.



One last comment regarding the dynamic of islands. When visiting the Dominican Republic we certainly had a snapshot of the process of evolution. Here, changes occur at a faster pace and forces threatening species are more destructive than those in the continent. This may explain why so many species were facing extinction threats.



Having in mind all the above is what inspired this tour. I hope you have found the trip educational and enjoyable, and wish your list of island endemics to have expanded.

The birdlist below summarizes the species reported in the tour. We certainly hope to see you again in tropical America!

BIRDLIST

Underlined species are endemic or of a special interest.

Ducks, Geese & Swans	Anatidae	
<u>West Indian Whistling-Duck</u>	<i>Dendrocygna arborea</i>	19+ individuals among many ringed individuals in the Sto Domingo zoo. This species is facing threats due to the extensive hunting
Grebes	Podicipedidae	
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	3 in the vicinity of Sierra Barahona and pair in Los Haitises
Pelicans	Pelecanidae	
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	3 ind near Bahoruco plus single sights in Rabo de Gato
Frigatebirds	Fregatidae	
Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	many sights along the coast
Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns	Ardeidae	
<u>Gray Heron</u>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	a photo of a single ind in Cabo Rojo represents the first verifiable record for the Dominican Republic. I need to wait for species confirmation, so keep this one in hold!
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	single individuals in Barahona and breeding colony in Los Haitises
Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	One ind in white morph. Cabo Rojo common and widespread along the caribbean coast, but always in few numbers
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	one in Cabo Rojo
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	various individuals in the islands of Los Haitises
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	boat trip
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	many sights in open areas and pastures
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	one ind nesting in the botanical garden and other sights in Los Haitises
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	several individuals in Los Haitises national park (boat trip)
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	pair in front of the Hotel Larimar
Ibises	Threskiornithidae	
White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	1 individual in Cabo Rojo
New World Vultures	Cathartidae	
Turkey Vulture (I)	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	several individuals in the NE section of the country (around Los Haitises). Uncertain date of introduction into the island
Hawks, Eagles & Kites	Accipitridae	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1 in Hotel in Barahona
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	3 ind in Sierra Bahoruco
<u>Ridgway's Hawk</u>	<i>Buteo ridgwayi</i>	an adult nesting with 2 chicks
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	scattered individuals in Bahoruco and Los Haitises
Falcons & Caracaras	Falconidae	

American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Sights of individuals and pairs along the roads, usually in dry areas one ind flying sighted by Bob and Lura, near Barahona
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	
Rails, Gallinules & Coots	Rallidae	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	common in ponds
Limpkin	Aramidae	
Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>	heard at night singing in Los Haitises
Plovers & Lapwings	Charadriidae	
Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1 in beach near Barahona
Wilson's Plover	<i>Charadrius wilsonia</i>	1 in beach near Barahona
	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	pair near Rabo de Gato and another ind in Cabo Rojo
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	4 ind in beach in front of Larimar hotel
Semipalmated Plover	Recurvirostridae	
Avocets & Stilts	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	pair in Cabo Rojo
Black-necked Stilt	Scolopacidae	
Sandpipers & Allies	<i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i>	three in Cabo Rojo
Willet	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	one in Cabo Rojo sights of isolated individual in most wetlands and beaches
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	pair in Alcoa road
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	
Solitary Sandpiper	Laridae	
Gulls & Terns	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	various ind in Barahona. Few in Sto Domingo the commonest tern. Many in Barahona and in Los Haitises
Laughing Gull	<i>Thalasseus maxima</i>	distant views of 3 individuals in Barahona
Royal Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	seven ind flying in Barahona
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	
Least Tern	Columbidae	
Doves & Pigeons	<i>Columba livia</i>	common in urban areas
Rock Pigeon (I)	<i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>	regular sights in Sierra Bahoruco, mainly
Scaly-naped Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas inornata</i>	one in Rabo de Gato
Plain Pigeon	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	scattered sights, usually in lowlands
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida aurita</i>	small numbers along the road to Rabo de Gato
Zenaida Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	common and widespread
Mourning Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	common in dry areas and in clearings
Common Ground-Dove	<i>Geotrygon leucometopia</i>	astonishing views of 4 ind foraging near Rabo de Gato
<u>White-fronted Quail-Dove (E)</u>	<i>Geotrygon montana</i>	one flushed on Los Haitises trail
Ruddy Quail-Dove	Psittacidae	
Parrots, Macaws & Allies	<i>Aratinga chloroptera</i>	200+ in Sto Domingo. Although common here, pretty well restricted to Sto Domingo
<u>Hispaniolan Parakeet</u>	<i>Aratinga nana</i>	two groups in Sierra de Bahoruco groups foraging on fruiting trees at sides of the road in Sirra Bahoruco. Few in Alcoa road. Although flight pattern does indeed fit into the <i>Amazona</i> genus, the voice sounds rather like a <i>Pionopsitta</i>
Olive-throated Parakeet (I)		
<u>Hispaniolan Parrot</u>	<i>Amazona ventralis</i>	

parrot!

Cuckoos	Cuculidae	
Mangrove Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus minor</i>	incredible views of one in lake Enriquillo
<u>Bay-breasted Cuckoo</u>	<i>Coccyzus ruficularis</i>	one flushed was seen by Ned, David and John. This is probably the hardest-to-see Hispaniola endemic!
<u>Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo</u>	<i>Coccyzus longirostris</i>	many individuals in forested areas and edge
Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	common in edge of forest as well as in open areas
Typical Owls	Strigidae	
Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	one at 04:00AM in the slope of Bahoruco mountains. Also a pair in nest in the same location
Nightjars & Allies	Caprimulgidae	
Antillean Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles gundlachii</i>	many flying in the early afternoon after a day of rain (feeding on May flies?)
<u>Greater Antillean Nightjar (Hispaniolan Nightjar)</u>	<i>Caprimulgus cubanensis</i> (<i>Caprimulgus ekmani</i>)	heard in Sierra de Bahoruco. This forest-nightjar perched within forest, thus difficult to see
Kingfishers	Alcedinidae	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megascops alcyon</i>	one flying in front of the boat in Los Haitises national park. Seen by Bob, Lura, John and Lindsay
Swifts	Apodidae	
Black Swift	<i>Cypseloides niger</i>	pair flying low in Barahona, in a rainy morning
White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>	one flying over Hotel Larimar, in a cloudy morning
Antillean Palm-Swift	<i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>	common and widespread in the whole country
Hummingbirds	Trochilidae	
<u>Antillean Mango</u>	<i>Anthracothorax dominicus</i>	the commonest Trochilidae of the trip. Seen in all locations except in dry coastal areas
<u>Hispaniolan Emerald</u>	<i>Chlorostilbon swainsonii</i>	pair in Sierra Bahoruco and an additional one in Caño Hondo. A hummingbird with deep forked tail. many males calling atop palm leaves or exposed branches. Incredible voice for being the second smallest bird in the world!
<u>Vervain Hummingbird</u>	<i>Mellisuga minima</i>	
Trogons	Trogonidae	
<u>Hispaniolan Trogon</u>	<i>Priotelus roseigaster</i>	pair in Sierra Bahoruco
Todies	Todidae	
<u>Broad-billed Tody</u>	<i>Todus subulatus</i>	very common in lowlands
<u>Narrow-billed Tody</u>	<i>Todus angustirostris</i>	less common and usually at higher elevations than previous. We saw at least two pairs
Woodpeckers & Allies	Picidae	
<u>Antillean Piculet</u>	<i>Nesocittes micromegas</i>	great views in Rabo de Gato and in Los Haitises
<u>Hispaniolan Woodpecker</u>	<i>Melanerpes striatus</i>	common and widespread
Tyrant Flycatchers	Tyrannidae	
Greater Antillean Elaenia	<i>Elaenia fallax</i>	pair in Sierra de Bahoruco
<u>Hispaniolan Pewee</u>	<i>Contopus hispaniolensis</i>	pair at the border with Haiti
Great-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>	one ind in Rabo de Gato and another in Hotel grounds of Los Haitises

<u>Stolid Flycatcher</u>	<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>	pairs in Los Haitises, Sierra Bahoruco and Rabo de Gato
Gray Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	very common and widespread. Replaces Tropical Kingbird in this country!
<u>Loggerhead Kingbird</u>	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	pair near the border with Haiti
Vireos & Allies	Vireonidae	
<u>Flat-billed Vireo</u>	<i>Vireo nanus</i>	pair in lower elevations of Sierra de Bahoruco very common voice. Seen about three times, including the bot gardens
Black-whiskered Vireo	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	
Crows, Jays & Magpies	Corvidae	
<u>Palm Crow</u> (Hispaniolan Palm Crow)	<i>Corvus palmarum</i>	few near Lake Enriquillo
	<i>Corvus leucognaphalus</i>	few pairs in Jaragua and Los Haitises
<u>White-necked Crow</u>	Hirundinidae	
Swallows	<i>Progne dominicensis</i>	3 flying over main square of Sto Domingo
<u>Caribbean Martin</u>	<i>Tachycineta euchrysea</i>	5 in Sierra Bahoruco and 3 in Alcoa road few hundreds nesting in the karst rock formation of Los Haitises nat park
<u>Golden Swallow</u>	<i>Petrochelidon fulva</i>	few individuals in Cabo Rojo although more numerous than next species
Cave Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	
Barn Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	few individuals in Cabo Rojo
Cliff Swallow	Turdidae	
Thrushes & Allies	<i>Myadestes genibarbis</i>	seen more than five occasions in Sierra de Bahoruco. What a beautiful song! Amazing views of five individuals in Sierra de Bahoruco
<u>Rufous-throated Solitaire</u>	<i>Turdus swalesi</i>	common and widespread in forested and semi-forested areas of the country
<u>La Selle Thrush</u>	<i>Turdus plumbeus</i>	
Red-legged Thrush	Mimidae	
Mockingbirds & Thrashers	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	common and widespread
Northern Mockingbird	Dulidae	
Palmchat	<i>Dulus dominicus</i>	probably the commonest species of the island. Seen daily. The only member of its family!
<u>Palmchat</u>	Parulidae	
New World Warblers	<i>Parula americana</i>	scattered individuals in edge of forested areas
Northern Parula	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	common, specially in red mangrove
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>	couple of sights in Rabo de Gato and Los Haitises
Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Dendroica virens</i>	one ind in Los Haitises
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	one at the bot gardens
Prairie Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	various sights of single ind in forested areas
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	couple of sights of single ind in forested areas
American Redstart	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	seen twice in damp grounds of forested lowland areas
Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	one at stream of Caño Hondo
Louisiana Waterthrush		

Common Yellowthroat <u>Green-tailed Warbler</u> (<u>Green-tailed Ground-Tanager</u>) <u>White-winged Warbler</u> (<u>Highland Hispaniola Tanager</u>) <i>Genus incerta sedis</i>	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i> <i>Microligea palustris</i> <i>Xenoligea montana</i>	one at Cabo Rojo 6 individuals were seen in Sierra de Barahona views of 4 individuals along the road to Sierra de Barahona many sights in open and urban areas. Song recalls the one of the inland group N of the Orinoco. Keep an eye on this species as it may be split in the future!
Bananaquit Tanagers & Allies Black-crowned Palm-Tanager	<i>Coereba flaveola</i> Thraupidae <i>Phaenicophilus palmarum</i> <i>Calyptophilus tertius</i> <i>Spindalis dominicensis</i>	common in semi-open areas amazing views of 2 individuals singing from an exposed branch in Sierra de Barahona great views of groups foraging on insects in shrubs at edge of forest in Sierra de Bahoruco
<u>Western Chat-Tanager</u> <u>Hispaniolan Spindalis</u> Buntings, Sparrows & Allies	Emberizidae <i>Tiaris olivaceus</i> <i>Loxigilla violacea</i>	favours urban areas. Common in Sto Domingo a male plus two females were seen in Sierra de Bahoruco
Yellow-faced Grassquit <u>Greater Antillean Bullfinch</u> Troupials & Allies Greater Antillean Grackle <u>Greater Antillean Oriole</u> (<u>Hispaniolan Oriole</u>) Siskins, Crossbills & Allies	Icteridae <i>Quiscalus niger</i> <i>Icterus dominicensis</i>	small groups were seen almost daily seen alone or in pairs, mostly from Rabode Gato to Los Haitises. One singing at dawn in Hotel Larimar
<u>Antillean Euphonia</u> <u>Antillean Siskin</u> Old World Sparrows House Sparrow (I) Weavers & Allies Village Weaver (I)	Fringillidae <i>Euphonia musica</i> <i>Carduelis dominicensis</i> Passeridae <i>Passer domesticus</i> Ploceidae <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	two pairs at the border with Haiti and additional sights in Alcoa road and Rabo de Gato great views of 6 individuals in Sierra de Bahoruco common in urban areas one male carrying nesting material near Barahona

Additional note: Should you wish to learn more about island biogeography, I strongly recommend the book *The Song of the Dodo*, by David Quammen (Touchstone book). Is a classic in this field.