

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

April 18-26, 2009



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The green-blue waters of the Caribbean Sea host many islands, some small and other larger, giving a crescent shape. Among this ring of islands some involve more bird species than others and the Greater Antilles are certainly the most diverse and bird-rich on the whole region, comprising Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti) and Puerto Rico.



Our Dominican Republic tour started in Santo Domingo where the Palmchat, the Black-crowned Palm-Tanager, the Hispaniolan Parakeet and the Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo welcomed tour participants to a trip with low bird diversity but certainly rich in endemism. Put on this way: Out of the 109 birds reported for the trip 28 were endemic species, and representing an impressive 26% of all the birds we saw for the tour!

The journey continued in Sierra de Bahoruco on a road along the international boundary with Haiti, where the core of the endemic bird species occur. Unfortunately, this region is showing severe deforestation that is threatening the future of the unique wildlife that occurs here. In this protected area we saw the almost extinct Solenodon (Mammal), while in the patches of remaining cloud forest we enjoyed many of the hard-to-see endemic bird species. As we birded along the road continued worries invaded myself: When I started leading the Dominican Republic tour I could draw a line along the international boundary, with basically bare soil in Haiti and forest in the Dominican Republic side. Nowadays this line is heterogeneous and large patches of forest have disappeared in the Dominican Republic side.

Despite the heavy habitat loss we were able to locate a good area where at dawn we enjoyed the song of the Rufous-throated Solitaire and La Selle Thrush, having astonishing views of both of these secretive species. The day continued with scope views of Hispaniolan Trogon, Hispaniolan Spindalis and Western Chat-Tanager among other endemic bird species.



The day after, in another corner of the park, we were able to observe Eastern Chat-Tanager and the Hispaniola Trogon again. Other areas visited nearby were the Alcoa road, Cabo Rojo marsh and the Jimaní salt lake. In all these areas we searched for

endemic birds or restricted distribution ones and although many were fairly easy we had to push a bit further for others. All these areas together gave us a good sampling of the avifauna of the Hispaniola but our grand finale was about to come.

From Barahona we moved north to Los Haitises national park. Our targets were two additional endemic species: the Ashy-faced Owl and Ridgway's Hawk. During the first night walk we heard two owls and after a while were able to scope it, so we were up to one species. In the day after, on the walk along the park trail, one Ridgway's Hawk landed in a exposed branch near us and called for many minutes. What a view! That was the last of the endemic species for the trip and our farewell for an island that is screaming for international support and local political commitment to conserve many of its unique and fragile ecosystems.



We end the week with an afternoon walk in the colonial zone guided by an expert of the history of Hispaniola and a visit to the Amber museum. The Dominican Republic is a small country, but is an island, hosting unique natural resources and an impressive history. This makes it a must to preserve for the future.

A big thank you goes to our driver, to the staff of El Quemaito and specially for Miguel Angel Landestoy, our local guide, whom helped to our success in Sierra de Bahoruco national park.

Do you wish to continue learning about island biogeography? I strongly recommend to read *The Song of the Dodo*, by David Quammen (Touchstone book). Otherwise if you have interest in learning more about the contemporary history during the last dictatorship of the country I recommend the reading of *The feast of the Goat*, by Mario Vargas Llosa. It is a must to understand the culture of many Caribbean countries.



I hope to see you again, in one of my Relaxed & Easy *Casa Maria & Hato Piñero tour*, or in the more demanding but equally rich in endemic species, the *Eastern Venezuela tour*.



The Birdlist.

Anatidae

West Indian Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna arborea*. This species was once widespread across the Greater Antilles but numbers have dropped drastically due to intensive hunting and habitat loss. We found three individuals in the water channel of the botanical garden in Santo Domingo.

White-cheeked Pintail. *Anas bahamensis*. Five individuals were seen from the road at the edge of Lago Enriquillo. The high level of this lake allowed excellent views of this species.

Podicipedidae

Least Grebe. *Tachybaptus dominicus*. A secretive pair was seen in Rabo de Gato, with the immature giving continuous alarm calls.

Pied-billed Grebe. *Podilymbus podiceps*. More than 7 individuals near Jumani, along with more than one hundred Caribbean Coots!

Pelecanidae

Brown Pelican. *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Daily views along the coastal area. More numerous in Los Haitises national park.

Fregatidae

Magnificent Frigatebird. *Fregata magnificens*. Common in coastal areas and numerous in Los Haitises national park. We saw mostly females and juveniles, but no males.

Ardeidae

Great Blue Heron. *Ardea herodias*. One flying over the mangrove in Los Haitises national park.

Great Egret. *Ardea alba*. Once pushed into the brink of extinction, the Great Egret is nowadays a symbol of good conservation and educational programs which should definitively be implemented in countries where some *Psittacidae* are being exported. People awareness and market pressure is what really stops the bird trade. We saw from 3 to a dozen in various wetlands.

Snowy Egret. *Egretta thula*. One of the most widespread *Ardeidae* in the Dominican Republic. Largest number for a single day was in Oviedo and Cabo Rojo, where we saw 25 individuals.

Little Blue Heron. *Egretta caerulea*. We missed in the first half of the trip and turned to be common in mangrove areas of Los Haitises national park.

Tricolored Heron. *Egretta tricolor*. First seen in Laguna Oviedo and later in Jimaní.

Reddish Egret. *Egretta rufescens*. A White morph individual was seen in Laguna Oviedo. Interestingly enough, the reddish form has not been reported for the Dominican Republic as yet.

Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. Daily views in pastures and in open areas.

Green Heron. *Butorides virescens*. Single individuals in most wetlands, usually shy but giving the classic conspicuous alarm call.

Threskiornithidae

White Ibis. *Eudocimus albus*. One individual in sub-adult plumage in Laguna Oviedo.

Glossy Ibis. *Plegadis falcinellus*. One in lake Enriquillo. Not a common species in the Dominican Republic.

Roseate Spoonbill. *Ajaia ajaja*. Three individuals were observed in Lago Enriquillo.

Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. Common in the north mountains of Los Haitises national park, while absent in most of the rest of the island. This is one of the southernmost breeding populations of the red-nape form from North America.

Accipitridae

Osprey. *Pandion haliaetus*. A pair in Jimaní, near the border with Haiti.

Sharp-shinned Hawk. *Accipiter striatus*. Daily views in the Sierra de Bahoruco national park and a pair along the Alcoa road.

Ridgway's Hawk. *Buteo ridgwayi*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Excellent views of an adult female in Los Haitises national park. The bird was perched for more than six minutes allowing photos and scope views. Also a second individual was seen in the afternoon soaring, while a third individual was sighted the morning we left to Santo Domingo.

Red-tailed Hawk. *Buteo jamaicensis*. One individual soaring in the slopes of the Sierra de Bahoruco national park.

Falconidae

American Kestrel. *Falco sparverius*. A widespread species in the Americas. We had several sights along the roads, and in open areas. The race for Hispaniola has clean underparts, almost immaculate white.

Rallidae

Caribbean Coot. *Fulica caribaea*. More than 120 individuals were seen in the westernmost corner of Lake Azuei, near Jimaní. This species is otherwise uncommon and difficult to see in other accesible wetlands of Hispaniola.

Common Moorhen. *Gallinula chloropus*. Scattered sights along the small ponds and channels in mostly urban areas.

Aramidae

Limpkin. *Aramus guarauna*. Heard one early morning in Sierra de Bahoruco national park.

Charadriidae

Black-bellied Plover. *Pluvialis squatarola*. A pair near Jimaní. One molting into breeding plumage.

Wilson's Plover. *Charadrius wilsonia*. 4 individuals in Lake Azuei. Two were quite vocal!

Killdeer. *Charadrius vociferus*. Single individuals in small brackish water wetlands.

Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus*. Common but certainly not numerous in internal brackish water lakes.

Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularius*. Single individuals were reported for Laguna Oviedo, Jimaní and around El Quemáito.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. A single individual in the large pond in the Alcoa road.

Greater Yellowlegs. *Tringa melanoleuca*. A single individual in Laguna Oviedo.

Ruddy Turnstone. *Arenaria interpres*. 3 individuals were foraging at the shore of Lake Jimaní, near the border with Haiti.

Laridae

Laughing Gull. *Larus atricilla*. More than ten individuals in juvenile and adult plumage were observed in Laguna Oviedo.

Least Tern. *Sternula antillarum*. First seen in Laguna Oviedo, where more than twenty individuals were flying low at the shore of the wetland in search for small fish. An additional individual was seen later in Laguna Azuei.

Royal Tern. *Thalasseus maxima*. More than a dozen of this large tern were enjoyed perched on the post of the old railroad in Los Haitises national park. Only one was seen previously in Santo Domingo.

Sandwich Tern. *Thalasseus sandvicensis*. Uncommon in April in the Dominican Republic. Only six individuals were seen on Laguna Oviedo, fishing in deeper waters than *Sternula antillarum*.

Columbidae

Usually overlooked, the pigeons and dove can show an incredible set of plumage coloration. Up to the last morning we were trying to gain a view of Ruddy Quail-Dove in order to claim to have seen all the *Columbidae* of the island, but unfortunately rain and a couple of elusive individuals did not allow to claim such prize. Nevertheless, the scope views of two quail-dove species is a prize in its own!

Rock Pigeon (I). *Columba livia*. Common in urban areas.

Scaly-naped Pigeon. *Patagioenas squamosa*. This species was scoped in the highlands of Sierra de Bahoruco national park, at elevations above 1000 meters. We scoped at least six individuals.

White-crowned Pigeon. *Patagioenas leucocephala*. Although common in previous tours the species proved to be difficult and shy this time. We had no one individual in the boat trip in Los Haitises national park and nailed only one individual flying away in one afternoon walk in the mangrove. Seen only by David and briefly by Tony.

Plain Pigeon. *Patagioenas inornata*. Mostly heard in the open lowlands. One in the scope in the highlands meant deforestation in areas where most of the endemic species occur. Sad news.

White-winged Dove. *Zenaida asiatica*. Fairly common along the road and in desert scrub areas.

Zenaida Dove. *Zenaida aurita*. Common this year. More than 8 individuals in the slopes of Sierra de Bahoruco national park, feeding on areas of exposed sand.

Mourning Dove. *Zenaida macroura*. Common in Santo Domingo and along most of the roads.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina*. Common in Santo Domingo and in the arid areas of the SW region of the country.

Key West Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon chrysis*. Great studies of an individual perched on a branch some six feet from the ground. We all enjoyed scope views of it.

White-fronted Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon leucometopia*. Treated by some authors as an endemic species to Hispaniola, split from Grey-headed Quail-Dove *Geotrygon caniceps*. We had amazing views of one species perched on a branch near ground for a while giving us the opportunity even to scope it!

Ruddy Quail-Dove. *Geotrygon montana*. Despite much effort, we only heard two individuals but heavy rain constrain our effort.

Psittacidae

Hispaniolan Parakeet. *Aratinga chloroptera*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Numerous around Santo Domingo and less common in the interior. A large roost in the Hotel Embajador estimated in 120+ individuals welcomed us to the Dominican Republic. Additionally, few pairs were seen in Rabo de Gato trail.

Olive-throated Parakeet (I). *Aratinga nana*. Presumably introduced. No early records for the Dominican Republic. A pair was seen coming down from Sierra de Bahoruco national park. This species was first documented in 1995 but is expanding its range rapidly. Ornithologists have expressed concern about the possible competition with the endemic *Aratinga chloroptera*.

Hispaniolan Parrot. *Amazona ventralis*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Small foraging groups were enjoyed with the scope. Shy. Probably in response to exploitation for the parrot trade.

Cuculidae

Mangrove Cuckoo. *Coccyzus minor*. Our first individual was seen in the botanical garden showing no fear of our presence. Furthermore, a responsive individual came to see us at La Placa, below the Sierra de Bahoruco national park.

Bay-breasted Cuckoo. *Coccyzus rufifularis*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Only heard. Unfortunately only one individual was heard distantly near La Placa. Despite our efforts we did not see this species.

Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo. *Coccyzus longirostris*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Common. Occurs in various habitats but remains in the lowlands. Seen almost every day.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Crotophaga ani*. Small groups were seen every day in open areas, pasture and farmland.

Tytonidae

Ashy-faced Owl. *Tyto glaucops*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Great views of a pair calling. Scoped for various minutes!

Strigidae

Burrowing Owl. *Athene cunicularia*. Various individuals near Puerto Escondido, and along the road to the Sierra de Bahoruco.

Caprimulgidae

Commonly referred as the *Goatsuckers*, the nighthawks and nightjars can be difficult to identify in the field. Aspects such as voice, habits and habitat are relevant to field identification.

Greater Antillean Nightjar (Hispaniolan Nightjar). *Caprimulgus cubanensis* (*Caprimulgus ekmani*). Sometimes considered as an endemic to Hispaniola. Two individuals were heard in Sierra de Bahoruco. Despite our efforts to locate one perched at the edge of the forest we failed to see this species. Only heard.

Apodidae

Antillean Palm-Swift. *Tachornis phoenicobia*. Fairly common in lowland areas, were feeds most of the day making circular flights with mixed glides and fast wing beats. This species is particularly larger compared with other palm-swift species in South America, a consequence of island dynamics.

Trochilidae

Antillean Mango. *Anthracothorax dominicus*. Common around Santo Domingo. Another pair in Barahona.

Hispaniolan Emerald. *Chlorostilbon swainsonii*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Superb close views in Sierra de Bahoruco national park. Too close for focusing with our binoculars!

Vervain Hummingbird. *Mellisuga minima*. Several at the hotel gardens in Santo Domingo, also in the botanical garden. This species is fond to perch atop the vertical spike of the fresh leaves of the Royal Palms.

Trogonidae

Hispaniolan Trogon. *Priotelus roseigaster*. Endemic to Hispaniola. A pair singing constantly near Zapotén was scope and enjoyed by everyone. A second pair was only heard in Cachote.

Todidae

Fossil evidence suggests that todies evolved from Central America but became extinct for unknown reasons. Five species remain in the Great Antilles and two are represented in Hispaniola. Todies are relatives of the motmots, and more distantly to the kingfishers.

Broad-billed Tody. *Todus subulatus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Daily views, mostly pairs calling insistently. The specific name *subulatus* refers to the bill shape.

Narrow-billed Tody. *Todus angustirostris*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Less common as occur at higher elevations. 2 pairs in the Bahoruco mountains. The specific name refers *angustirostris* refers to the narrow bill!

Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher. *Megaceryle alcyon*. A single individual in Caño Hondo. Certainly quite late in time to migrate!

Picidae

Antillean Piculet. *Nesocittes micromegas*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Seen twice and heard almost every day. Certainly a large piculet, compared to those in South America. The genus refers to the fact that is an island species with *nesos* meaning island and *ktites* meaning an inhabitant.

Hispaniolan Woodpecker. *Melanerpes striatus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Seen every day. Many pairs were found nesting. This species is quite tolerant to human presence and seems to adapt well to farmland, urban areas and other public areas.

Tyrannidae

Greater Antillean Elaenia. *Elaenia fallax*. A pair in Zapotén happened to be the only individuals in the whole tour. The pair we saw was foraging in the canopy of the tree.

Hispaniolan Pewee. *Contopus hispaniolensis*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Another endemic species seen in Sierra de Bahoruco national park. Although uncommon, we were able to locate two pairs.

Stolid Flycatcher. *Myiarchus stolidus*. Common and vocal. Found mainly in scrubby vegetation in the lowlands. The genus *Myiarchus* is widespread in South America with many look-alike species and are best told by voice. Seen in Haiti as well.

Gray Kingbird. *Tyrannus dominicensis*. Very common and widespread. Many pairs were seen and heard during the trip.

Loggerhead Kingbird. *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*. Only seen once in Sierra de Bahoruco national park. Nevertheless, given the fact that these individuals were flying back and forth we can claim to have seen it in both countries: the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The specific name *caudifasciatus* makes reference to the rufous edged tail.

Vireonidae

Flat-billed Vireo. *Vireo nanus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. We struggle to see this species in the first two occasions at the lower slopes of Sierra de Bahoruco but later in the trip we had astonishing views with a responsive pair.

Black-whiskered Vireo. *Vireo altiloquus*. Seen every day at almost every time we were in the field. Although numerous and vocal it is difficult to see. We worked a bit hard for our first sight in the botanical garden but later in the trip we had great views in areas of lower vegetation.

Corvidae

Palm Crow (Hispaniolan Palm Crow). *Corvus palmarum*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Superb views in the Alcoa road singing from the top of a pine tree. This species is usually seen in pairs and we were wondering if the mate was nesting in the vicinity of the area.

White-necked Crow. *Corvus leucognathus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. The first sight of this species was an individual flying over the mangrove of Laguna Oviedo, but later in the trip we had astonishing views of about three individuals perched in Los Haitises national park.

Hirundinidae

Caribbean Martin. *Progne dominicensis*. We saw this species in three occasions. The first sight was while driving across a highway in Santo Domingo. The second on the drive to the northern part of the country and the third sight near Sabana de la Mar. There are not many records for the species earlier in the year. Additionally, I saw a pair nesting in the gate of the plane the day we were leaving the country. The migratory pattern of the species is still unknown and ornithologists believe it may migrate to South America during the non-breeding season.

Golden Swallow. *Tachycineta euchrysea*. We had excellent views in Zapotén with many individuals flying across the valley. This species is apparently extinct in Jamaica leaving the Hispaniola as the only area where breeding pairs are found.

Cave Swallow. *Petrochelidon fulva*. Several pairs in the boat trip to Los Haitises national park. Nice views of many individuals leaving the crevices contiguous to the sea.

Turdidae

Rufous-throated Solitaire. *Myadestes genibarbis*. Amazing views of individuals singing for two consecutive days. This is certainly one of the most beautiful songs of any bird in Hispaniola, calling mostly at dawn and dusk.

La Selle Thrush. *Turdus swalesi*. Endemic to Hispaniola. What a view! Three individuals were seen for about 20 minutes as the species came out to explore the grasses contiguous to the forest.

Red-legged Thrush. *Turdus plumbeus*. Common and widespread. A thrush with long and bright red legs. When flying shows two white areas in the tail. Hard to confuse with other species.

Mimidae

Northern Mockingbird. *Mimus polyglottos*. Widespread. Many individuals mostly in human populated areas or in farmland. Tends to decline as the forest becomes thicker and heavier. The specific name *polyglottos* makes reference to the mimic capabilities of the species!

Dulidae

Monotypic and endemic family of Hispaniola, represented by one widespread species, the Palmchat.

Palmchat. *Dulus dominicus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. The national bird of the Dominican Republic. The genus *Dulus* means to the name given by the local people: The slave. This name apparently makes reference to the subservient behavior of the species compared to that of the Gray Kingbird.

Parulidae

Northern Parula. *Parula americana*. Seen three times in Santo Domingo and in Rabo de Gato.

Yellow Warbler. *Dendroica petechia*. Three individuals were seen at Oviedo, being of the resident race named *Golden Warbler*.

Black-throated Blue Warbler. *Dendroica caerulescens*. A male and a female in Sierra de Bahoruco.

Pine Warbler. *Dendroica pinus*. Various individuals of the resident race were seen on the Alcoa road. Responsive to playback!

American Redstart. *Setophaga ruticilla*. Common. Seen almost every day.

Ovenbird. *Seiurus aurocapilla*. Commoner than in previous years, we counted seven individuals this time.

Common Yellowthroat. *Geothlypis trichas*. One individual near the Avocado plantation on the drive back from Sierra de Bahoruco.

Green-tailed Warbler. *Microligea palustris*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Also named Green-tailed Ground-Warbler. Two pairs were seen well in Sierra de Bahoruco. Not very vocal. The genus *Microligea* makes reference to a small warbler, while the specific epithet *palustris* indicates that they inhabit marshy / boggy areas. Apparently first collected in areas of dense vegetation with damp ground hence the specific name.

White-winged Warbler. *Xenoligea montana*. Endemic to Hispaniola.

Amazing views of this always-active species. One individual remained perched for a while trying to digest a caterpillar. Our video tape may be the first ever made of the species!

Important. Genetic studies have revealed that *Microligea* and *Xenoligea* are close relatives to *Phaenicophilus* (*Palm-Tanagers*) suggesting that are indeed tanagers, not warblers. This controversy keeps back and forth, for what we have decided to remain with the traditional taxonomy.

Genus incerta sedis

Bananaquit. *Coereba flaveola*. What can I say about the ubiquitous Bananaquit? First at all it is are a common species, and second, is widespread in most neotropical countries. Here comes the trick: Keep track of your sights anywhere you go as it could be split in at least 3 species!

Thraupidae

This family comprises the distinctive tanagers and allies and is represented in Hispaniola for few species, but most of which are endemic to the island! In our tour we had views of all these species. Special remark is given to both chat-tanagers *Calyptophilus*, once considered a single species, but recently accepted as two separate species endemic of Hispaniola.

Black-crowned Palm-Tanager. *Phaenicophilus palmarum*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Locally named “Cuatro Ojos” (Four-eyes) referring to the four white spots in the head plumage. Seen almost daily as is a widespread species as is tolerant to human presence.

Western Chat-Tanager. *Calyptophilus tertius*. Endemic to Hispaniola. We had to work a bit harder to get this one in Sierra de Barahona. The first pair remained eluding us, but a second pair later in the morning showed up nicely.

Eastern Chat-Tanager. *Calyptophilus frugivorus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. This species was first seen in a VENT tour back in 2006. After a couple of efforts everyone got superb views or a pair of this skulking species.

Hispaniolan Spindalis. *Spindalis dominicensis*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Small family groups were seen regularly along the Sierra de Barahona highlands. Certainly one of the most beautiful endemic species of Hispaniola. The genus *Spindalis* is endemic to the Greater Antilles.

Emberizidae

Yellow-faced Grassquit. *Tiaris olivaceus*. Common in Santo Domingo and widespread throughout the Dominican Republic. Due to the rice fields near Los Haitises national park we were able to see a half dozen of males singing and displaying.

Greater Antillean Bullfinch. *Loxigilla violacea*. We enjoyed views of silent pairs or small groups foraging on fruits and berries. The genus *Loxigilla* makes reference to the heavy bill of the bullfinches.

Icteridae

Greater Antillean Grackle. *Quiscalus niger*. Fairly common and widespread but not in large numbers. Seen almost daily.

Greater Antillean Oriole. *Icterus dominicensis*. We happened to get great view of this species up to the last morning. There were several sights, starting

with a juvenile in the avocado plantation and a pair in Rabo de Gato and another pair in Los Haitises. This species is sometimes treated as Hispaniolan Oriole, an endemic species of the Hispaniola.

Fringillidae

Antillean Euphonia. *Euphonia musica*. Nice pairs in Sierra de Bahoruco. Our first sight was of a female, but later in the trip we nailed pairs well exposed. The plumage of this species suggest an affinity with Golden-rumped Euphonia (*E. cyanocephala*) of South America.

Antillean Siskin. *Carduelis dominicensis*. Endemic to Hispaniola. Heard frequently, but happened to see well only 4 individuals in Sierra de Bahoruco. Apparently declining due to habitat loss.

Shiny Cowbird. *Molothrus bonariensis*. 7 individuals in lago Azuei.

Passeridae

House Sparrow (I). *Passer domesticus*. Common in Santo Domingo.

Ploceidae

A bird family of Sub-Saharan Africa, consisting on heavy bill species specialized for eating seeds. The only member of the family in our continent was brought by pet traders and is currently found in wild populations in some Caribbean islands and in other countries of South America.

Village Weaver (I). *Ploceus cucullatus*. Large nesting colonies were seen on the way to the international border with Haiti and a single flock of more than 25 individuals was observed in the rice field of Los Haitises national park.

Mammals, reptiles & amphibians.

Solenodontidae

Hispaniolan Solenodon. *Solenodon paradoxus*. Endemic to Hispaniola. We were shocked when one individual of this extremely rare mammal walked along the road in front of the vehicle. This species resembles a shrew with a long snout and a naked tail. The Solenodon (The word meaning groove tooth) are nocturnal and have a venomous saliva that flows from modified glands across grooves on the second lower incisors. The Solenodon is of a special interest because it retained some primitive mammalian characteristics, resembling the one's that lived near the end of the age of the dinosaurs. The Hispaniolan Solenodon is considered practically extinct. For more information about this rare mammals look in the web for the following link:

<<http://www.popreport.com/blog-pl/?p=215>>

Herpestidae

Asian Mongoose. *Herpestes javanicus*. 1 individual in near the lodge in Los Haitises national park. This species is called to be responsible for the drastic collapse of the population of the Solenodon. The mongoose was deliberately introduced in the 1800s into the Greater Antilles to control rat population in rice fields. Furthermore, it has become a true pest in such islands, threatening many bird species.

Bufo

Marine Toad. *Bufo marinus*. Various individuals were seen in Rabo de Gato and in Los Haitises national park.

Hylidae

Hispaniolan Common Tree Frog. *Osteopilus dominicensis*. One individual in Los Haitises national park.

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