

**Annotated Checklist for Mass Audubon Cuba Birding Survey**  
*February 1 – 13, 2015*

**Bob Speare**

The list that follows includes the common names of all the species of birds recorded on the tour. For scientific names and the specific localities where different species were recorded, participants should refer to the daily field checklist that was maintained during the tour. Comments and brief annotations follow the names indicated below.

Species marked with a \* are endemic to Cuba.

Species marked (I) are introduced species to Cuba.

**West Indian Whistling-Duck** – *a flock of 11 were a wonderful sighting of this declining Caribbean species - seen resting under one of the raised cottages at the hotel next to ours in Cayo Coco.*

**Blue-winged Teal** – *seen at several freshwater wetland locations.*

**Northern Shoveler** – *observed at a few different localities*

**Ring-necked Duck** – *a number of these ducks seen mixed in with Lesser Scaup and Ruddy Ducks on a roadside reservoir.*

**Lesser Scaup** – *as noted above*

**Hooded Merganser** – *just one example seen of this handsome waterfowl*

**Red-breasted Merganser** – *seen a few times driving in and out of Maria La Gorda, and again along the causeway out to Cayo Coco.*

**Ruddy Duck** – *mixed with the Ring-necked Ducks noted above*

**Helmeted Guineafowl (I)** – *2 flocks seen at separate farm localities, but not considered wild.*

**Pied-billed Grebe** – *seen at Guanahacabibes and Zapata regions*

**Magnificent Frigatebird** – *it was fun watching these soar at several coastal locations*

**Neotropic Cormorant** – *seen at several localities, especially at Las Salinas*

**Double-crested Cormorant** – *smaller numbers at several coastal locations*

**Anhinga** – *another fun one to watch – the “snake bird”*

**American White Pelican** – *a large flock at La Salinas was terrific for this relatively recently-occurring visitor to Cuba*

**Brown Pelican** – *seen in many locations throughout the trip*

**Least Bittern** – *1 spotted by just one or two in our group*

**Great Blue Heron** – *often mixed in with other waders*

*“Great White Heron” – a nice look at this unusual white morph Great Blue in the Cayo Coco area*

*Great Egret – common and widespread*

*Snowy Egret – common in coastal wetland habitats*

*Little Blue Heron – impressive numbers seen of this beautiful wader throughout the trip!*

*Tricolored Heron – again, good numbers mainly in Zapata and Cayo Coco.*

*Reddish Egret – several seen (both color morphs) at Las Salinas and Cayo Coco region. The “drunk” egret.*

*Cattle Egret – abundant and widespread throughout the island, including 423 on just one side of the bus on one day; thank you Mary and Brendan!*

*Green Heron – fairly common, especially in Zapata area*

*Black-crowned Night-Heron – only a single individual observed*

*Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – a couple seen and one heard*

*White Ibis – many seen, mainly in Zapata and Cayo Coco areas.*

*Glossy Ibis – 4 seen at the fish farm*

*Roseate Spoonbill – an impressive group seen on the way into Cayo Coco.*

*Greater Flamingo – over 100 seen on the way out to Cayo Coco, and then more with fun observations of bathing!*

*Turkey Vulture – incredibly abundant everywhere on the island with 453 seen one day from one side of the bus; thanks again Mary and Brendan!*

*Osprey – small numbers at a few locations.*

*Snail Kite – 3 separate sightings, including an active group of 4 hunting apple snails in a small wet area off the highway.*

*Gundlach’s Hawk\* – a few good sightings of this endemic hawk, including an active pair on the nest!*

*Cuban Black-Hawk\* – several seen near different coastal mangrove areas.*

*Broad-winged Hawk – a single bird seen of a probable resident individual.*

*Red-tailed Hawk – a few resident individuals seen at a few localities*

*Northern Harrier – only 1 bird observed coasting over a roadside field.*

*Clapper Rail – a fantastic look at two at Cayo Coco!*

*Purple Gallinule – a couple observations including a roadside view with a Northern Jacana*

*Common Gallinule – seen at several wetland localities*

*American Coot – large numbers on several extensive wetland ponds*

**Limpkin** – *One observed at Hotel La Granjita*  
**Black-bellied Plover** – *seen at La Salinas and Cayo Coco*  
**Semipalmated Plover** – *a few noted at the above locations*  
**Killdeer** – *small numbers at scattered localities throughout*  
**Black-necked Stilt** – *Nice looks at this handsome bird in a few locales.*  
**Northern Jacana** – *a great sighting at a roadside pond on our way to Guanahacabibes*  
**Greater Yellowlegs** – *just a few seen at a couple coastal locations.*  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** – *more common than the above species.*  
**Willet** – *observed at La Salinas and Cayo Coco*  
**Spotted Sandpiper** – *scattered single migrants at several localities*  
**Ruddy Turnstone** – *seen at several coastal sites*  
**Sanderling** – *several seen at Cayo Coco*  
**Least Sandpiper** – *a couple groups noted at Cayo Coco area*  
**Short-billed Dowitcher** – *groups seen at both La Salinas and Cayo Coco.*  
**Laughing Gull** – *good numbers seen near the coast, especially at Zapata and Cayo Coco*  
**Ring-billed Gull** – *a single bird seen; uncommon in Cuba*  
**Herring Gull** – *a single bird seen in Havana.*  
**Gull-billed Tern** – *seen at La Salinas and at the fish farm*  
**Caspian Tern** – *the more common tern species – 32 seen at La Salinas*  
**Royal Tern** – *small numbers seen nearly everywhere near saltwater*  
**Rock Pigeon (I)** – *seen in virtually every township in Cuba*  
**Scaly-naped Pigeon** – *only 1 example briefly observed of this scarce and elusive pigeon*  
**White-crowned Pigeon** – *small numbers seen or heard at a few localities*  
**Plain Pigeon** – *a few sightings at Maria La Gorda and Zapata*  
**Eurasian Collard-Dove (I)** – *common in several areas, usually near habitation*  
**Zenaida Dove** – *small numbers observed at several different forest reserves*  
**Mourning Dove** – *common and widespread throughout the island*  
**Common Ground-Dove** – *fairly common in small numbers everywhere*  
**Key West Quail-Dove** – *5 individuals of this shy and elusive species were seen at the water bath near the underground cafe*  
**Gray-fronted Quail-Dove\*** – *3 briefly seen on the trail at Bermejas*  
**Blue-headed Quail-Dove \*** – *very shy and elusive, however we were treated to seeing 3 together feeding on the trail at Bermejas.*  
**White-winged Dove** – *a few seen at various locations.*

**Great Lizard-Cuckoo** – *a real crowd pleaser, this impressive cuckoo was seen or heard almost every day*

**Smooth-billed Ani** – *common in roadside fields everywhere on the island*

**Barn Owl** – *4 birds seen and heard after dinner at La Granjita.*

**Bare-legged Owl\*** – *2 birds seen from their roosting tree in Bermejas.*

**Cuban Pygmy-Owl\*** – *heard several times and seen in the full open on one of the trails in Guanahacabibes.*

**Stygian Owl-** *a terrific look at this majestic owl in the Zapata area.*

**Antillean Palm-Swift** – *dozens seen at many locations*

**Bee Hummingbird\*** – *we were treated to great looks at both males and females, this tiny endemic hummingbird is the smallest bird species in the world*

**Cuban Emerald** – *widespread and quite common in small numbers throughout the island*

**Cuban Trogon\*** – *widespread, vocal, and fairly common, this handsome endemic species is the national bird of Cuba and was a favorite with many trip participants*

**Cuban Tody\*** – *arguably one of the most appealing species in Cuba, this tiny and fairly common endemic rivaled the previous species in popularity*

**Belted Kingfisher** – *small numbers seen at suitable habitats*

**West Indian Woodpecker** – *this stunning woodpecker was fairly common almost everywhere we traveled*

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** – *4 individuals observed of this quiet and unobtrusive wintering species in Cuba*

**Cuban Green Woodpecker\*** – *another of the handsome endemic species of Cuba that was seen in small numbers at several localities*

**Northern Flicker** – *a resident subspecies, but only a few observed*

**Fernandina's Flicker\*** – *a rare endemic seen well at the Crocodile Farm in the Zapata area*

**Crested Caracara** – *scattered individuals observed at several localities*

**American Kestrel** – *fairly common in open areas, including both West Indian color morphs, neither of which is found in N.A.*

**Merlin** – *only 2 individuals observed*

**Peregrine Falcon** – *also seen only twice*

**Cuban Parakeet\*** - *fine looks at a flock feeding in a large tree in Bermejas.*

**Cuban Parrot** – *small numbers seen, and fine scope views obtained in the Zapata area*

**Cuban Pewee** – *common and confiding, we had many nice looks at this plain-colored little flycatcher*

**La Sagra's Flycatcher** – *heard and seen well on numerous occasions, this Myiarchus flycatcher is also found in the Bahamas*

**Loggerhead Kingbird** – *common, vocal, and widespread throughout Cuba*

**Giant Kingbird** – *a great look at this future endemic*

**White-eyed Vireo** – *seen or heard a couple times*

**Thick-billed Vireo** – *fine views of this species were obtained at Cayo Paredon Grande, one of the only localities in Cuba where the species is found*

**Cuban Vireo\*** – *common and vocal, this endemic vireo with the “bug eyes” was a familiar sound in many forested areas on the island*

**Yellow-throated Vireo** – *just two individuals seen*

**Cuban Crow** – *the crow with the funny voice, despite its name, this species is also found on the Caicos Islands*

**Cuban Martin** – *1 individual seen of this bird; being proposed as a breeding endemic.*

**Tree Swallow** – *good numbers seen at La Turba in Zapata*

**Cave Swallow** – *surprisingly good numbers were seen at a couple locations including our picturesque lunch spot, Casa Tiki.*

**Zapata Wren\*** – *2 individuals were seen at Zapata Swamp; very rare endemic species; world population estimated at 120-140 pairs*

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** – *a fairly common wintering species found in several forest areas*

**Cuban Gnatcatcher\*** – *4 individuals of this Cuban endemic observed on Cayo Paredon Grande*

**Cuban Solitaire\*** – *a marvelous song from an otherwise rather non-descript endemic species; locally common, but not widespread and, as we found out, often very hard to observe*

**Red-legged Thrush** – *common in most forested areas, though shy and often difficult to observe*

**Gray Catbird** – *a fairly common wintering species from N.A.*

**Northern Mockingbird** – *common and often distractingly conspicuous species*

**Bahama Mockingbird** – *a very local and quite uncommon resident in the Cayo Coco area; 2 observed*

**Ovenbird** – *widespread, but generally shy and difficult to observe*

**Louisiana Waterthrush** – *a couple seen; usually found near moving water*

**Northern Waterthrush** – *fairly common along wetland edges everywhere*

**Black-and-white Warbler** – *small numbers seen in a number of areas*

**Tennessee Warbler** – *Just 1 seen in San Diego*

**Common Yellowthroat** – *very common in brushy and wetland areas everywhere*

**American Redstart** – *good numbers seen in a number of areas, quite widespread*

**Cape May Warbler** – *small numbers seen of this generally common Cuban migrant and uncommon wintering species*

**Northern Parula** – *a common and widespread neotropical migrant in Cuba*

**Magnolia Warbler** – *we saw only 1 of this locally uncommon neotropical migrant and wintering species*

**Yellow Warbler** – *just a couple seen including one at the fountain near the end of our walk in Old Havana.*

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** – *common and widespread, one of the most frequently encountered neotropical migrants in Cuba*

**Palm Warbler** – *abundant and widespread, probably the most frequently observed neotropical migrant observed in Cuba*

**Olive-capped Warbler** – *a few seen only in appropriate pine habitat; also found in the Bahamas*

**Yellow-throated Warbler** – *small numbers in many areas; often associated with palms*

**Prairie Warbler** – *small numbers seen, usually in mangrove areas*

**Black-throated Green Warbler** – *scattered sightings of a few individuals at several different localities*

**Wilson's Warbler** – *1 seen where we watched the Key West Quail Dove*

**Yellow-headed Warbler\*** – *a reasonably common endemic warbler in many spots on the western end of the island*

**Oriente Warbler\*** – *several seen in the Cayo Coco area where it replaces the Yellow-headed Warbler*

**Western Spindalis** – *striking and fairly common, this species was encountered at a number of different localities*

**Red-legged Honeycreeper (I)** – *Heard at a few localities and finally seen at our lunch spot en route back to Havana*

**Cuban Grassquit\*** – *several observed at one of our first birding stops*

**Yellow-faced Grassquit** – *fairly common, often observed in small flocks*

**Cuban Bullfinch** – *widespread but not generally common, all participants had good looks at this species*

**Zapata Sparrow\*** – *a few individuals observed along the swamp in La Turba in Zapata*

**Indigo Bunting** – *seen a couple times including mixed with the honey creepers*

**Red-shouldered Blackbird\*** – *the few observed from the roadside on our way out of the Zapata area were the only individuals seen of this endemic Red-winged Blackbird look-alike*

**Tawny-shouldered Blackbird** – *another blackbird similar to Red-winged Blackbird but with shoulder patch less obvious; small scattered flocks seen at a few localities.*

**Eastern Meadowlark** – *8 individuals observed at the fish farm and along the roadside.*

**Cuban Blackbird\*** – *an endemic blackbird with an interesting voice; widespread throughout the island*

**Greater Antillean Grackle** – *common and widespread and easily distinguished from previous species by its prominent yellow eyes and deeply keeled tail*

**Shiny Cowbird** – *a couple individuals spotted by a few of the group*

**Cuban Oriole\*** – *seen regularly at scattered localities; one very notable aggressive territorial interaction between two individuals!*

**House Sparrow (I)** – *widespread and common*