

JAMAICA

Tropical Treasure Island

Fri 15th-Sat 23rd Mar 2019



Trip photos (clockwise from top left): Jamaican Oriole • Jamaican Owl • Jamaican Tody • Orangequit • Caribbean Dove • Worm-eating Warbler. © Mike Crewe/Limosa

**Report compiled by tour leader:
Mike Crewe**

JAMAICA | Tropical Treasure Island**Tour Leaders:** Mike Crewe with Dwayne Swaby & Roger Thompson**With:** Mike Bamforth, Tony & Sue Crowther, Brian Garner, Phil & Marion Hodgson, Gill Michaels, Phil Parker.**Daily Diary****Day 1 – Friday, March 15th 2019**

Our travels began today with a relatively civilised check-in time at Gatwick for our flight to Montego Bay. The flight went smoothly and we eventually negotiated the various stages of arrival and met up with our driver, Raymond. The drive to the lodge took around three hours so it was a late dinner then off to bed with thoughts of the morrow. We had managed to notch up an American Barn Owl on the way and some took the opportunity to check out the local potoo with Richard.

Day 2 – Saturday, March 16th 2019

Despite a long day yesterday, everyone was up well before breakfast and enjoying their first Jamaican endemics. One of the hummingbird feeders was attracting Vervain Hummingbird and Jamaican Mango, White-crowned Pigeons criss-crossed the skies and a bottlebrush tree gave us Red-billed Streamertail and a Northern Parula – that's three of the four hummingbird species under the belt already! After breakfast, we walked out onto the main trail to the back gate then birded the top end of the Woodpecker Trail. More streamertails and the local Northern Mockingbirds and Greater Antillean Grackles drew our attention, along with a variety of butterflies. Jamaican Vireos were highly active but eventually gave themselves up and a pair of American Kestrels and a Red-tailed Hawk cruised over. Up near the back gate, a Grey Kingbird was a nice find on a wire, while a Mangrove Cuckoo flirted with us for a moment. The top of the Woodpecker Trail gave us Jamaican Woodpecker, Loggerhead Kingbird and a wonderful Jamaican Tody. Black-whiskered Vireos were singing everywhere but flatly refused to show themselves!

Lunch was a nice, casual affair, followed by a short siesta. At 15:30 we headed out along the Waterfall Trail, sifting through a variety of doves and then tracking down our first Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo and an elusive Worm-eating Warbler. A pair of Jamaican Becards remained elusive – the male was heard singing while the female showed briefly in the high canopy – but noisy Olive-throated Parakeets showed well as they fed on the African Tulip Tree flowers. It had been a full day with some great birds, but dinner was soon calling and we headed back to the estate house to prepare.

Day 3 – Sunday, March 17th 2019

Our first day 'out and about' on the island saw us leaving under cover of darkness and heading east then south, up into the Blue Mountains. As dawn approached, we turned off the coast road and got a nice feel for the life of the 'real' Jamaica, off the tourist track. Passing a string of little hamlets and settlements, we followed a river valley up into the hills and soon arrived in some lovely forest habitats, where we met up with Roger, our guide for the day. Roger had already got some good birding sorted out and a road corner by a little shack provided us with an amazing run of great birds, starting with a very obliging pair of Jamaican Blackbirds. Black-faced Grassquits, Black-throated Blue Warbler Jamaican Pewee and Jamaican Woodpeckers followed before most of the group scaled a bank to look for Crested Quail-doves. The latter failed to show, but plenty of other birds obliged instead, while those of us back on the road added a nice pair of Yellow-shouldered Grassquits.

Our next main stop came at a section of old road, which we walked along while Trevor took the bus ahead on the new road. Almost immediately we got out, a Rufous-throated Solitaire was heard calling, but this proved to be a very tricky bird today and our attentions wandered to some Prairie Warblers. Several Rufous-tailed Flycatchers obliged here, as did a hyperactive Jamaican Elaenia, Jamaican Tody and Jamaican Oriole. We finally made it to our breakfast stop for a picnic with coffee and cinnamon porridge. Beyond here, we walked another section of old road for a short way and wrestled with a wary Jamaican Becard, while Pale-eyed Thrushes and Jamaican Spindalis fed on blackberries. Arrowhead Warbler was a nice find here and Orangequits showed well. The rain started to fall at this point, so we jumped back on the bus and continued to Hardwar Gap. Here, we finished our morning walks with another Jamaican Tody before enjoying lunch. After lunch, we began the return journey, making a few more stops on the way. We picked a few spots more or less at random and added several Blue Mountain Vireos, Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo and Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, along with a pair of wonderfully sublime Crested Quail-doves. Time was pressing and rain drizzling again, but we walked as far as the bus then took the walk along the old section of road while Trevor went over the top. Again, this section was very birdy with more of the same from this morning, but with added bonuses in the shape of obliging Blue Mountain Vireos and a Greater Antillean Bullfinch – as well as another Rufous-bellied Cuckoo. Time to head

down the hill and drive back to base, but we still had one brief stop on our hands, to view a small colony of Antillean Palm Swifts.

Day 4 – Monday, March 18th 2019

A day on the estate today, with Dwayne guiding us to the best little nooks and crannies to find birds. A pre-breakfast walk for a couple of hours was very rewarding, starting with a Vervain Hummingbird in full-on display flight! A walk down the Woodpecker Trail was very productive as we notched up all three species of grassquit in a cut-over area and had nice views of Black-and-white Warbler, Sad Flycatcher, Zenaida Dove and a Jamaican Euphonia. After much angst and stress, we finally had good views of several Black-whiskered Vireos and an Osprey breezed overhead before we headed in for breakfast.

After a short break, we wandered down a new trail that forked off the Waterfall Trail. It was very hot already, but we started with a Yellow-faced Grassquit and followed up with a perched Northern Potoo in glorious full view. Pigeons and doves lined our route, including a pair of Ruddy Quail-doves, but most were elusive in the heat and proved hard to pin down well. Jamaican Vireos and Jamaican Orioles mooched through vine tangles and many intriguing things drew our attention, including a variety of brightly-coloured tree seeds. A Mangrove Cuckoo, another Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Parulas and American Redstarts were noted and, on our return for lunch, a smart American Kestrel was perched at the very top of a coconut palm.

Back out again after a siesta, we took the steeper trail down to the reservoir. We paused to appreciate the perched Northern Potoo again, then took time to work on getting acceptable views of a pair of Stolid Flycatchers that really didn't want to stay still! Down at the reservoir, we added greatly to our list with a whole new bunch of wetland birds. Yellow-crowned Night Herons were in the bushes and the reservoir itself held plenty of Ruddy Ducks, Least Grebes, Blue-winged Teal, American Coots and Common Gallinules. A quick search through the coots gave us a single bird that showed the wholly white frontal shield of a Caribbean Coot, but that taxon seems now to be consigned to history! Less common birds included a Pied-billed Grebe, Lesser Scaup, four Ring-necked Ducks, two Black-necked Stilts and two Spotted Sandpipers. Northern Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat were at the water's edge. It had been a very full day and we were a little on the late side getting back for dinner - but it had been worth it and the Red Stripe went down well with spicy beef stew!

Day 5 – Tuesday, March 19th 2019

A day back on the road and heading East again today. We drove further along the coast road to Boston Bay and then headed up into the John Crow Mountains, which form an eastern extension to the Blue Mountains National Park. We started our journey in the dark, which gave us some roadside American Barn Owls again and we passed a succession of scenic little bays, before eventually turning inland and up into the hills. Our packed breakfasts were attacked first – the cinnamon porridge was wonderful again – but the calm was broken when a Black-billed Streamertail appeared beside the road. Before we knew it, we were wandering along the road in search of parrots, with many of the commoner and now familiar local specialities seen along the way; Black-whiskered and Jamaican Vireos, Jamaican Oriole, American Redstart, White-chinned Thrush, Jamaican Spindalis and more. Parties of Ring-tailed and White-crowned Pigeons flew overhead, then a run of Yellow-billed Amazon sightings began, with noisy groups of birds heading to feeding areas.

Eventually, perseverance paid off and a pair of Black-billed Amazons flew over. These were soon followed by a second pair, which dropped down and sat quietly in full view for as long as we wanted to enjoy them. The parrots had been on our list of 'target birds' today, the other was Jamaican Crow; this latter species proved too elusive, however and, although we heard a couple, we couldn't pin one down. As the day hotted up and the sun beat down, we turned to butterflies – especially the lovely Malachites and White Peacocks - and we had another brief encounter with a Rufous-throated Solitaire. Lunch was calling and we headed down to Boston Bay for some fabulous Jerk chicken and Jerk pork.

After lunch, we called in briefly at San San and had some nice encounters with Caribbean Doves. After that, we intended a leisurely drive back to base with just a quick stop at the Spanish River. But the birds had other ideas as a whole collection of goodies awaited us! The expected Little Blue, Tricoloured and Green Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets, Common Gallinules, American Coots and Pied-billed Grebes were joined by a group of eight Glossy Ibis, while two Belted Kingfishers were a nice find, as was a scuttling Sora Rail. A Greater Yellowlegs and at least two Spotted Sandpipers were present, otherwise it was quiet for waders. Our final entertainment here came when Mike B's Tilly hat was wafted into the river by a passing lorry and a kindly passing cyclist figured out a way down to the river and retrieved it for him! All this had put us a little behind schedule, but before long we were back at base and enjoying another great meal of vegetarian fry up with mashed sweet potatoes.

Day 6 – Wednesday, March 20th 2019

After a series of early starts, it was time for a bit of an easy day today.... well, after one more early start! We set

off at 05:00hrs on a mission and, after a short walk, we found ourselves on volcanic clifftops and overlooking the open ocean. Our mission here was to watch for White-tailed Tropicbirds and before long, these wonderful, slender waifs were breezing around in front of us. Three birds came in for a few pre-breeding season circuits and showed very well in the early morning light. Cave Swallows were also wheeling around the cliffs and a single Magnificent Frigatebird cruised by. The walk back provided a few bits and pieces of regular birds, including a nicely perched Jamaican Euphonia, then we drove a short distance to a shady beach spot for breakfast. The beaches held Least and Spotted Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones and a Semipalmated Plover, while several colourful Mangrove Warblers were working through the Sea Grapes and Terminalia trees. White-collared Swifts cruised over before we took a stroll further along the road to a mangrove creek. Careful searching here provided us with a Northern Waterthrush (though annoyingly elusive!), then Wayne took us to a little gap in the mangroves where we found a pair of West Indian Whistling Ducks with a party of Blue-winged Teal. The heat was building up and we decided to head back for a siesta before lunch.

We took an afternoon off today for some R&R, but after dinner, we were up and out again in pursuit of birds. This time it was Jamaican Owl that was in our sights and, after a little bit of hit and miss, we finally got great views of this fine endemic species. Indeed, we even finished up seeing two of these wonderful birds – the first rather jumpy and elusive, the second posing in a palm tree.

Day 7 – Thursday, March 21st 2019

Today we were to try out a new location that had been suggested to us by Dwayne. So, we headed off west to Ocho Rios with a packed breakfast and took a small track up into the hills behind town. We were soon at our destination and tucked into our last serving of plantain and cinnamon porridge. Walking through fern-laden woodland, we soon arrived at a large clearing that was clearly a seasonally flooded pond, but now was mostly dry after a shortage of rain this past winter. However, water was still present at one end and before long we had tracked down a nice little cluster of Masked Ducks that were lurking amongst the bare tree stems. American Coots, Common Gallinules and both Pied-billed and Least Grebes were here, too, while Shiny Cowbirds and Prairie Warblers flitted about in the branches of submerged trees and bushes. Antillean Palm Swifts fed low overhead and a gathering of Grey Kingbirds probably involved migrants that had stopped off to feed. As well as Masked Ducks at this location, we also had hoped for Jamaican Crows and sure enough, a pair came in and gave some nice views, despite being hassled by Loggerhead Kingbirds.

We headed back for lunch and a siesta, then a small but intrepid group headed off to tackle the reservoir and all of its obstacle courses! This time we did make it up onto the dam and spent some time scanning for anything of interest. All the usual suspects appeared to still be here, including the Lesser Scaup and at least two of the Ring-necked Ducks. Waders seemed largely to have moved on, but five Black-winged Stilts were nice to see, while the Spotted Sandpipers had been joined by three Solitary Sandpipers. A Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo called but remained hidden

Day 8 – Friday, March 22nd 2019

Today saw a change from the itinerary of last year as we had more or less a full day before we needed to check in for our flight. We had a cooked breakfast at a respectable time then headed west, with a little bit of roadside birding on the way. A pair of Jamaican Crows posed on an African Tulip Tree for a while (along with a Jamaican Woodpecker) and we even came across a couple of Magnificent Frigatebirds sat on roadside phone poles! Further on, we checked a brackish roadside pool near the appropriately-named town of Salt Marsh, which held a small gathering of Least Sandpipers, some Black-necked Stilts and a Lesser Yellowlegs. A Mangrove Warbler also posed nicely for us. We made good time and arrived for lunch at a restaurant overlooking the sea. Royal Terns, Laughing Gulls and Brown Pelicans loafed nearby and Magnificent Frigatebirds lurked menacingly. Single Willets and Grey Plovers nipped past and a variety of egrets and herons completed the scene.

After lunch, we had to run the gauntlet of Montego Bay traffic, but it was well worth the effort as we headed for the Rocklands Bird Sanctuary and enjoyed a lovely hour at the feeders with remarkably tame – but wild – birds. Hand-feeding the Red-billed Streamertails seemed to be a popular pastime, while flocks of Black-faced and Yellow-faced Grassquits crowded onto a pile of spilt grain, along with Common Ground-doves and a couple of Caribbean Doves. Bananaquits, Orangequits, Jamaican Orioles and Jamaican Mangos were all here, while wintering warblers that fancied a banana diet included a pair of Black-throated Blue Warblers and a wonderful, caramel-headed, Worm-eating Warbler. This was a perfect way to end what had been a great trip and we all came away with some fond memories of our time in Jamaica. All we needed to do now was get to the airport and head for home.

Day 9 – Saturday, March 23rd 2019

After trundling back across the Atlantic overnight, we had made up some of the delay that we had had in

departure and we were soon wending our ways homeward. It had been a wonderful week of warm weather, great birds, great company (thanks everyone!) and plenty of Red Stripe!

Annotated List of Species Recorded (JE = Jamaican Endemic; re = regional endemic)

(Total species - 111)

West Indian Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arborea* re

Two with Blue-winged Teal on a pool at Green Castle on 20th were a very welcome bonus.

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*

Migrants were present in good numbers this year, including over 50 at the Green Castle reservoir.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Four females were at the Green Castle reservoir on 18th, with two there on 21st.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

A female was at the Green Castle reservoir on 18th and 21st.

Masked Duck *Nomonyx dominicus*

A wonderful treat to see two males and five females, lurking amongst submerged bushes near Ocho Rios.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Noted at several wetland sites, including at least 30 at the Green Castle reservoir.

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*

Plentiful at wetland sites with at least 20 at Green Castle and 10 at Ocho Rios.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

One at Green Castle reservoir on 18th, three at the Spanish River on 19th and one at Ocho Rios on 21st.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Wonderful views of birds prospecting nest sites along the cliffs on the morning of 20th.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Eight at the Spanish River on 19th and seven seen in the Montego Bay area on 22nd.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

At least three birds were at the Green Castle reservoir during the week, including a courting pair. One was also seen from the bus along the coast on 19th.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

One to four on three dates at various wetland sites, with best views at the Spanish River on 19th.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common and noted daily, especially around cattle herds.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

One at the Spanish River on 19th and one or two in the Montego Bay area on 22nd.

Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor*

One at the Spanish River on 19th and one at our lunch stop near Montego Bay on 22nd.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Good numbers at coastal sites on four dates, including white youngsters, dark adults and some half-and-half!

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Two at the Spanish River on 19th.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Coastal birds noted around Ocho Rios and the Montego Bay area – with best views at our final lunch stop.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

A few along the coast on four dates with great close-ups of raiding birds at our lunch stop on the final day.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common throughout and seen daily.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One seen heading in the general direction of away on 18th.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Singles noted on three dates around Green Castle.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

One gave brief but good views as it scurried across the Spanish River on 19th.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

Small numbers at scattered wetlands and good numbers at the estate reservoir. Plenty of opportunity to hear the cackling calls, which are very different from our UK moorhens.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

About 20 on the estate reservoir, including some with chicks. The form previously known as **Caribbean Coot** "*Fulica caribaea*" is now recognised merely as a white-shielded morph of American Coot. At least one of these birds was at the estate reservoir, as well as some showing intermediate characters.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Up to five on the estate reservoir and others seen at the Spanish River and around Montego Bay.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

One flew west at the lunch stop on our final day but was only seen by a couple of us.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

One on the beach at Green Castle on 20th.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Singles at the Green Castle reservoir on 18th and 21st and at the Spanish River on 19th.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Two on a beach near Green Castle on 20th but only seen from the bus as we passed by.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Six or so at the Green Castle beach on 20th then around 15 on a pool east of Montego Bay on 22nd.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Ones and twos at various wetlands during the week and best seen at the Green Castle reservoir.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

Three seen at the Green Castle reservoir on 21st.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

One enjoyed at close range on a pool to the east of Montego Bay on 22nd.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

One flew west at the lunch stop on our final day but was only seen by a few of the group.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

One on the Spanish River on 19th.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

A late-comer to the list but common in the Montego Bay area on 22nd.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

Frequent along the coast and often seen from the bus as we drove to sites further east and west. Great views at our lunch stop on the final day.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Noted in small numbers in towns and villages along the coast.

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala* re

Common and widespread and regularly seen flying over – a few perched birds showed well, too.

Ring-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas caribaea* JE

A bird of higher elevations, seen well at Ecclesdown Road and along the Blue Mountains road.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina*

A bit tricky, as most pairs were seen from the bus on roads while we were in transit, but they redeemed themselves by showing very well at Rocklands on 22nd.

Crested Quail-dove *Geotrygon versicolor* JE

After we missed out at a couple of regular spots, we had great views of a roadside pair along the Blue Mountains road on 17th.

Ruddy Quail-dove *Geotrygon montana*

Ever elusive, we managed flight views of this species on 18th and 21st but never really pinned one down.

Caribbean Dove *Leptotila jamaicensis* re

Heard most days, with best views at San San on 19th and at Rocklands on 22nd. A very attractive species.

Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita* re

Common and seen daily, especially along roadsides.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

A common species in the lowlands, around towns and in farmland areas.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

Two to five on six dates in grassy areas – a pair seemed to favour the tennis courts at Green Castle.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*

Singles seen on three dates at Green Castle and Ecclesdown Road.

Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo *Coccyzus pluvialis* JE

A couple of singles were seen along the Blue Mountain road near Section on 17th.

Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo *Coccyzus vetula* JE

Heard or seen on five dates at Green Castle and at higher elevation sites.

American Barn Owl *Tyto furcata*

A great year for this species with five sightings of pre-dawn birds seen along roadsides.

Jamaican Owl *Pseudoscops grammicus* JE

Dwayne weaved his magic and produced the goods at Green Castle on 20th. Our first was a little awkward and didn't show well, but the second sat and posed nicely in a coconut palm.

Northern Potoo *Nyctibius jamaicensis*

One was a regular visitor to the estate house throughout the week, while another posed nicely on its daytime perch on the reservoir trail.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonalis*

Low birds passed us on three dates, with best views around Green Castle on 18th and 20th.

Antillean Palm Swift *Tachornis phoenicobia* re

We stopped to look at the small breeding colony at Annotto Bay on 17th, then noted them on three other dates later in the week, including some birds feeding close to us at the little wetland near Ocho Rios on 21st.

Jamaican Mango *Anthracothonax mango* JE

Seen well at the feeders around the estate house during the week and at Rocklands on 22nd.

Red-billed Streamertail *Trochilus polytmus* JE

Always a celebrity! You can never see too many of these birds, and we managed to see good numbers pretty much daily. Rocklands provided the fun experience of being able to 'hand feed' wild birds!

Black-billed Streamertail *Trochilus scitulus* JE

With a little patience, we enjoyed great views of a male of this range-restricted species on Ecclesdown Road.

Vervain Hummingbird *Mellisuga minima* re

One or two noted regularly around the Green Castle Estate and occasional birds elsewhere. Wonderful to see a full flight display at Green Castle on 17th.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

Two were 'leader onlys' along the lower part of the Blue Mountains road on 17th, but we then added two at the Spanish Bridge on 19th and one at the tropicbird spot the next day.

Jamaican Tody *Todus todus* JE

Some nice views of these little gems around Green Castle Estate – and even enjoyed while lying down for one of us!

Jamaican Woodpecker *Melanerpes radiolatus* JE

An attractive and wonderfully common species, seen and heard daily.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

Frequently seen along roadsides and a pair occasionally seen on the estate.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

One was sat up and preening in a bare tree near Ocho Rios on 21st.

Black-billed Amazon *Amazona agilis* JE

Usually a tricky one, we had a couple of pairs of these at Ecclesdown Road on 19th, with one pair sitting in full view in a nearby tree for great scope views.

Yellow-billed Amazon *Amazona collaria* JE

Plentiful at Ecclesdown Road on 19th, with groups ferrying around overhead in the morning. Also less expected birds at Green Castle on 16th and Ocho Rios on 21st.

Olive-throated Parakeet *Eupsittula nana*

Widespread in small numbers but not seen well until we found them feeding in the African Tulip Trees on Ecclesdown Road on 19th.

Jamaican Elaenia *Myiopagis cotta* JE

Great views of this elusive species near Section in the Blue Mountains on 17th.

Jamaican Pewee *Contopus pallidus* JE

Rather local, but good views were had in the Blue Mountains and on Ecclesdown Road.

Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*

Missed last year, so it was nice that this species had already arrived in good numbers this year. First seen at Green Castle on 16th, then a scattering of roadside birds before we had perhaps 15 or more near Ocho Rios on 21st.

Loggerhead Kingbird *Tyrannus caudifasciatus* re

Widespread and common and seen daily in suitable habitats. A noisy and boisterous species!

Sad Flycatcher *Myiarchus barbirostris* JE

Widespread in woodland throughout and always entertaining to watch as they busy themselves after insects.

Rufous-tailed Flycatcher *Myiarchus validus* JE

One to four on four dates. A rather dusky-looking, large-tailed flycatcher.

Stolid Flycatcher *Myiarchus stolidus* re

A large, chunky flycatcher, with a boisterous pair watched on one of the trails at the estate on 18th.

Jamaican Becard *Pachyrampus niger* JE

One or two in forest areas on five dates, including an interesting young male in transitional plumage and a rather odd-looking male with only one tail feather!

Jamaican Vireo *Vireo modestus* JE

Common, widespread and always noisy! Often skulking but some were seen very well.

Blue Mountain Vireo *Vireo osburni* JE

A plain but endearing species, with at least three seen in the Blue Mountains on 17th.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus* re

Widespread in wooded areas and a common background song at Green Castle. Several seen well after the

frustration of the first few days!

Jamaican Crow *Corvus jamaicensis* JE

As with last year, this proved the hardest of the endemics. However, as we travelled further west we came into their territory more and we finally had plenty of opportunity to see and hear these interesting birds.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Migrants were noted on the move on 17th, 19th and 22nd.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

A busy flock was around the coastal cliffs on the morning of 20th and smaller numbers seen here and there on a total of four dates.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

A widespread and common species around human habitation and seen particularly well at the estate house.

Rufous-throated Solitaire *Myadestes genibarbis* re

Commonly heard at altitude and some nice views were eventually achieved by some in the Blue Mountains, but always a tricky bird to really get to see well.

White-eyed Thrush *Turdus jamaicensis* JE

Shy and retiring, small numbers were eventually seen very well in the Blue Mountains on 17th.

White-chinned Thrush *Turdus aurantius* JE

Common and seen daily, especially along shady roads and tracksides. More often on the ground than the previous species, which makes it much easier to locate.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

A small introduced population from escaped cagebirds. At least 12 seen near Ocho Rios on 21st.

Jamaican Euphonia *Euphonia jamaica* JE

One to three on three dates and sometimes showing well, such as the bird near Section on 17th.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

A good year with a total of three birds seen, including a ridiculously tame bird eating banana at Rocklands!

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

A nice find of one at the Spanish River bridge on 19th.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

One heard but not seen at the Green Castle reservoir on 18th, then one seen briefly in the Green Castle mangroves on 20th.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

A total of five individuals of this wonderful species seen during the week – mint humbugs!

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Heard in damp areas on four dates, with most of the group catching a glimpse at some point.

Arrowhead Warbler *Setophaga pharetra* JE

Two along the Blue Mountains road on 17th, with one on the sidetrack just before it rained showing very well.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

The commonest wintering wood-warbler, with some great views of this hyperactive little gem daily.

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

The second most common wood-warbler, with birds seen well most days.

Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

Some lovely views of this smart species, now split from American Yellow Warbler. Seen in coastal scrub and mangroves at Green Castle on 20th and near Montego Bay on 22nd.

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caeruleascens*

Seen or heard on five dates with best numbers in the Blue Mountains and best views of a male and female on the feeders at Rocklands.

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*

Small numbers with two to six birds seen on three dates, including some stunning adult males at Ocho Rios.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

Single adult males in the Blue Mountains on 17th and Ecclesdown Road on 19th.

Jamaican Oriole *Icterus leucopteryx* re

Common and widespread and often helpfully showy.

Jamaican Blackbird *Nesopsar nigerrimus* JE

The scarcest of the endemics, this species proved very obliging for us, as we found a lovely feeding pair in the Blue Mountains on 17th that came to within about 10 feet of some of us.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

A few glimpses here and there, including a group of 10 or so that flew over on 18th, then we finished with great views of at least eight birds at Ocho Rios on 21st.

Greater Antillean Grackle *Quiscalus niger* re

Widespread and very common around the estate and along the coast road.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

Amazingly common throughout our stay. The endemic (nominate) race has a charcoal grey throat and face.

Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivaceus*

Small numbers in grassy places at scattered sites, but best seen in good number at Rocklands, including one sitting on Marion's knee!

Black-faced Grassquit *Tiaris bicolor re*

Small numbers in the Blue Mountains and around Green Castle, then lovely views at Rocklands on 22nd.

Yellow-shouldered Grassquit *Loxipasser anoxanthus JE*

Present but elusive at Green Castle but seen well along the Blue Mountains road on 17th.

Greater Antillean Bullfinch *Loxigilla violacea re*

Around a dozen seen along the Blue Mountains road on 17th and at least two on Ecclesdown Road on 19th.

Orangequit *Euneornis campestris JE*

Very common in a wide range of wooded habitats but often elusive. Mostly seen in the higher forests but also enjoyed in good numbers at the Rocklands feeders.

Jamaican Spindalis *Spindalis nigricephala JE*

The only tanager on the island, we saw several pairs of this really smart species in the forested areas.

Mammals**Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus***

This introduced species was seen daily, which suggests that it is worryingly common on the island – not good news for the endangered mammals and ground-nesting birds. Early books record it as Javan Mongoose, but the two species have now been split and Jamaican animals are from the Indian population.

Reptiles

Jamaican Turquoise Anole *Anolis grahami*

Jamaican Grey Anole *Anolis lineatopus*

Jamaican Giant Anole *Anolis garmani*

Jamaican Croaking Gecko *Aristelliger praesignis*

Amphibians

Cane Toad *Rhinella marina*

Lesser Antillean Whistling Frog (Antilles Coqui) *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei (Introduced)*

Butterflies

I've had a chance to dig out more info and to work through my photos, so here's a more thorough list of species recorded, with some notes:

Polydamas Swallowtail *Battus polydamas jamaicensis* – the common 'black' swallowtail that we saw daily

False Androgeus (Thersites) Swallowtail *Papilio thersites* – mostly yellow species with a narrow black border

Apricot Sulphur *Phoebis sennae* – orange species; one by the entrance gate/tennis court

Cloudless Sulphur *Phoebis sennae* – Frequent, bright yellow species

Dina Yellow *Pyrisitia dina parvumbra* – small yellow with plain underside

Mimosa Yellow *Pyrisitia nise nise* – the small yellow with single dark spot on underside of hindwing

Giant White *Ganyra josephina paramaryllis* – a female at Green Castle by the estate house

Ceraunus Blue *Hemiargus ceraunus ceraunus* – a small blue, frequent around Green Castle Estate

Gulf Fritillary *Agraulis vanilla* – seen well in the Blue Mountains. Bright orange with silver spot

Mexican Fritillary *Euptoieta hegesia hegesia* – Typical brown and orange fritillary, seen at Green Castle

Zebra Longwing *Heliconius charitonius* - Frequent

Julia *Dryas iulia* – Narrow-winged orange species

White Peacock *Anartia jatrophae jamaicensis* – frequent around coastal wetlands

Malachite *Siproeta stelenes* – green and black, Ecclesdown Road

Jamaican Calisto *Calisto zangis* – small, dark brown butterfly, frequent along trails at Green Castle

Potrillo Skipper *Cabares potrillo* – dark brown species with silver spots on Green Castle trail

Tropical Checkered Skipper *Pyrgus oileus* – black and white, chequered species on Ecclesdown Road

Three-spotted Skipper *Cymaenes tripunctus* – tiny brown species with on Green Castle trail

Others

Caribbean Hermit Crab *Coenobita clypeatus*

