

# Birding Dominican Republic 2026

## Trip Report

By Marta Curti

28 December - 6 January 2026



Hispaniolan Amazon. Photo by Marta Curti

**Tour Leader:** Marta Curti

**Local Guide:** Efrain Feliz

Dominican Republic, found on the island of Hispaniola and bordering Haiti, is considered a biodiversity hotspot, and for good reason. It is home to 35 endemic birds, as well as many reptiles, amphibians and plants found nowhere else on Earth. With numerous lakes and rivers, lush tropical rainforests, pine forests, mangroves and coastal lagoons, Dominican Republic has a surprisingly wide range of picturesque landscapes and natural habitats. We were able to visit a few of these on this 10-day tour. We enjoyed exploring the landscapes from the higher elevation habitats of **Sierra de Bahoruco National Park**, to the lowest point in the entire Caribbean - the picturesque **Lago Enriquillo**. We also visited **The Peregrine Fund's Ridgway's Hawk Conservation Project** in the Punta Cana area and saw the Critically Endangered **Ridgway's Hawk** in the wild. In total, we observed 127 bird species, adding new species to the list at almost every stop. We saw a total of 34 of the 35 possible endemic bird species, two endemic and endangered iguanas, and added 44 new bird species to the group's life list!

## Highlights of the trip

1. Our morning in the Jardín Botánico Nacional in Santo Domingo, where we picked up several endemic species including **Palmchat**, **Hispaniolan Woodpecker**, and the lovely **Broad-billed Tody**.
2. Seeing an **Ashy-faced Owl** along the Alaoca Road right before dawn.
3. Our first views of the **Black-crowned Palm Tanager** in Sierra de Bahoruco National Park.
4. Finding the **Western Chat-Tanager** after at least 45 minutes of searching.
5. Getting terrific views of the **Eastern Chat-Tanager** on a beautiful, sunny morning, after having spent the previous day searching for it in the pouring rain, and getting only quick views.
6. The morning in Zapoten, where we added several endemics to the list including **White-winged Warbler**, **La Selle Thrush**, and **Hispaniolan Elaenia**.
7. Hearing the lovely, haunting call of the **Rufous-throated Solitaire** as we walked through the beautiful Zapoten region of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park.
8. Close to the border of Haiti, we got some fabulous looks at **Hispaniolan Euphonia** and **Antillean Piculet**.
9. After stopping to watch **Olive-throated Parakeets**, being surprised by the appearance of two **Key West Quail-Doves** sitting calmly on the forest floor, giving us a long time to appreciate their beauty.
10. Observing a Critically Endangered **Ridgway's Hawk** perched on a power line for several minutes, and getting great looks at this beautiful raptor.



The first Black-crowned Palm-Tanager of our trip. Photo by Marta Curti



# Itinerary

## Day 1: December 28 — Start of the Tour: Arrival in Santo Domingo

Our tour began on a positive note. Upon exiting the airport, we caught a glimpse of **Antillean Palm Swifts** soaring overhead - our first bird species for the trip and a lifer for the group. We left the airport and headed to our hotel in the historic part of the nation's capital. After checking in and a short rest, we strolled the cobblestone streets of the Zona Colonial. We enjoyed some local ice cream and took in the sights. We even picked up two more endemic species. We saw (and heard) several small flocks of **Hispaniolan Parakeets** flying overhead on several occasions. We got nice looks at a pair that flew past us in lovely light - their brilliant green and red plumage shining in the sun. We also saw our first **Palmchat** carrying nesting material into a palm tree, though it was a bit backlit. We then had a nice dinner in a restaurant adjacent to one of this areas stunning plazas and returned to our hotel to rest and get ready for more birding tomorrow.

## Day 2: December 29 — Santo Domingo Botanical Gardens to Pedernales

We woke at a reasonable hour this morning, enjoyed breakfast at the hotel and then drove to our first official birding spot of the trip - El Jardin Botanico Nacional (National Botanical Gardens) in Santo Domingo. The minute we stepped out of the vehicle, we saw another lifer for the group - the endemic **Hispaniolan Woodpecker**. It was perched at the top of a palm tree in nice light. Almost immediately after, we started seeing the much sought after **Palmchat**, with great views right from the parking lot. We also saw an **American Kestrel** perched in the distance. As soon as we entered the gardens we heard and saw several **Greater Antillean Grackles** foraging on the ground. As we walked further into the lovely gardens, we picked up a number of new species for the trip - **Gray Kingbird**, **American Redstart**, **Northern Parula**, **Black-and-White Warbler**, **Bananaquit**, and



Female Hispaniolan Woodpecker seen in Sierra de Bahoruco NP. Photo by Marta Curti

**Smooth-billed Ani.** Though these are some of the more commonly-seen birds in Dominican Republic, it was lovely to watch them and enjoy seeing a bit of their behavior. Of course, the highlight of our morning was picking up several more endemic species including the small but spectacular **Broad-billed Tody**, the impressive **Hispaniola Lizard-Cuckoo**, and a pair of lovely **West Indian Whistling-Ducks**. On our way back to the car, we also got great views of a **Hispaniolan Mango** and a **Black-Whiskered Vireo**.

The rest of the day was a travel day as we made our way to the western edge of the country - the town of Pedernales. We picked up a few species along the way, including **Magnificent Frigatebird**, **Western Cattle-Egret**, and **Turkey Vulture**. We also enjoyed watching the ever-changing vegetation and passing through small but bustling communities. We arrived in Pedernales around 6 p.m. Once again, when we stepped out of our vehicle, we spotted a new species for the tour and a lifer for the group - the tiny **Vervain Hummingbird**. We watched it for several minutes as it flitted about the trees in someone's front yard. We then checked into our hotel, enjoyed a nice dinner at a local restaurant and turned in for the night in preparation for an early morning tomorrow. All in all we saw close to 30 species, with a total of 9 lifers for the group all in one day!

### **Day 3: December 30 — Alcaoa Road - Sierra de Bahoruco and Cabo Rojo**

Today we had quite an early start, departing our hotel at around 5:00 a.m. We drove to the Alcaoa Road, towards Sierra de Bahoruco National Park (Sector Hoyo de Pelempito). We made a few stops while it was still dark, hoping to see some nightjars and owls. It was a particularly cold morning (about 9°C) and the night sky was stunning and full of stars. We heard several of our target species, Stygian Owl and Hispaniolan Nightjar, but we weren't able to see them. Finally, just before dawn, we picked up the endemic **Ashy-faced Owl** calling nearby. After a few minutes of searching, we were able to catch a quick look at it perched in the pine trees not too far from us. It



**The loud and lovely Hispaniolan Palm-Crow. Photo by Marta Curti**



didn't sit still for long. We watched as it took off, flew across the road in front of us and disappeared again. It was a quick, but lovely sighting.

As the sun began to rise, and the temperatures warmed up, we drove higher up the mountain, to about 1,200 masl. After parking the car we were immediately greeted about a flock of 5 **Hispaniolan Palm-Crows**, making a racket as they flew between the pine trees. We also saw a small flock of **Hispaniolan Crossbills** flying overhead, but we didn't get very good looks. We started to walk along the road and immediately picked up a group of **Yellow-rumped** and **Yellow-throated warblers** flitting about the pines. We also got some nice looks at another new species for the trip - a **Pine Warbler**. We were enjoying watching the warblers when we heard the unmistakable call of another endemic, the **Hispaniolan Amazon**. We had seen a pair fly over while we were still near the car, but this time, a flock of around 20 flew right overhead in incredible light. We got terrific views. Later in the morning, we would come across another large flock, and be able to observe several perched in the pine trees above us.



Another endemic for the trip - the Green-tailed Warbler. Photo by Marta Curti

We continued to bird and picked up several more endemics and lifers for the group. One of the highlights of the morning was seeing the **Black-crowned Palm-Tanager** in nice light as it moved above us in the pine trees. At that same time, Efrain pointed out a male and female **Hispaniolan Crossbill** perched on a small structure in front of us. Another large flock of **Hispaniolan Palm-Crows** came and landed in the pines directly in front of us and, and we got brief looks at a small flock of **Antillean Siskins**. Another **Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo** also made an appearance.

After breakfast, we headed back down the mountain, and our bird list continued to grow. We watched as a **Hispaniolan Emerald** flitted among the flowers - its brilliant green throat flashing in

the sun. A **Hispaniolan Pewee**, **Green-tailed Warbler**, and **Stolid Flycatcher** made an appearance, and the Stolid Flycatcher in particular was close enough and stayed visible long enough for us to really appreciate the subtle but beautiful colors characteristic of this species.

Further down the road, we saw a beautiful male and female **Hispaniolan Spindalis** and got lovely looks at the striking **Narrow-billed Tody**. Hamish spotted two **Caribbean Martins** perched on snags, we saw a **Red-tailed Hawk** soaring in the distance, and caught a quick glimpse of a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** that zoomed past us. We also had nice looks at an **Antillean Piculet**. During the day, there were a few other species we heard - such as Hispaniolan Elaenia and Western Chat-Tanager (one of the most important targets for the group). However, we didn't see either of these species at this time. But, we knew we would have more chances for them later in the trip.

After leaving the park, we headed to Cabo Rojo, and birded at a small pond. Though we didn't pick up any lifers for the group, we added a good number of waterbirds to our list. **Greater and Lesser yellowlegs**, **Least Sandpiper**, **Tricolored Heron**, **Short- and Long-billed dowitchers**, and more than 50 **Black-necked Stilts** were some of the highlights. We then enjoyed a delicious lunch of fried fish, coconut rice with pigeon peas, salad, and fried plantains, and a refreshing glass of fresh orange juice. After lunch, we made a quick stop at the sea and picked up a **Royal Tern** for our list. We also saw our first reptile - the Curly-tailed Lizard - in the parking lot. We then returned to our hotel to rest a bit.



One of several Narrow-billed Todies seen on this tour. Photo by Marta Curti

In the evening, around 5 p.m., it was time for more birding! We drove back to bird the lower elevation portions of the same road as this morning. We made several stops along the way and enjoyed the beautiful xeric landscape and the changing colors of the sky as the sun set. We saw several more **Gray Kingbirds** and **Hispaniolan Amazons**. Though the afternoon was pretty quiet bird-wise, we did manage to pick up another new species for the trip, the **Prairie Warbler** and another lifer for the group, the **Greater Antillean Bullfinch**. As the sun was setting, we saw several bats emerge and fly past us on the road. Our last goal for the night was another endemic - the **Hispaniolan Nightjar**! After not too long, Efrain heard one flying down the road. We were able



to get some nice looks as it swooped past us. Happy with our sighting, we slowly made our way back to the car. We had dinner at our hotel and enjoyed a nice rest after a long, but very productive day.

#### **Day 4: December 31 — Alcoa Road - Sierra de Bahoruco, Cabo Rojo, and Paraiso**

We had a leisurely morning today, relatively speaking. We enjoyed a sit down breakfast before heading back to Alcoa Road in search of a few species we missed the day before. Our main target for the day was the **Western Chat-Tanager**. At our first stop, we didn't have much luck, so we continued to drive higher up the mountain. At our second stop, it took a while, but we eventually heard the bird calling on the hill just beside the road. We searched in vain for a long time. We could hear the bird calling above us and pinpoint the area it was calling from, but this species likes to be low in the brush and is difficult to see. Finally, after nearly an hour of straining our eyes and necks, the bird made a quick appearance, popping out of the vegetation and briefly perching on a low branch before flying across the road. After more searching, we were finally able to get some good looks at this unique species, and were happy with our first, but not our last, lifer of the morning.

While Efrain walked back to get the vehicle, he spotted two **Hispaniolan Trogons** nearby. He signaled for us to follow him and we saw not one but two trogons perched in the trees not too far off the road. Though they were always a little bit obscured by branches, we managed to get some terrific looks in great light. We then hopped back into the vehicle and began climbing a bit higher in elevation, in the hopes of seeing Golden Swallows. At our first stop, we saw two lovely soaring **Red-tailed Hawks**, but not much else. So we decided to continue driving higher up the mountain. At our next stop, Efrain spotted one **Golden Swallow** flying in the sky. We were able to pick up on its subtle coloration and observe the erratic beat of its flight as it flapped above us for several minutes. We also saw another lovely **Hispaniolan Emerald** feeding in some low flowers just in front of us.

After a wonderful morning, we headed back down toward Cabo Rojo again. Here, we picked up several new species including **Northern Shoveler**, **White Ibis**, and **Roseate Spoonbill**. Our plan had been to eat lunch on the beach, but because it was New Year's Eve, restaurants were all closed, so we decided to head toward our next destination - the town of Paraiso. Along the way, we made several stops and picked up many new species for the trip including **American Wigeon**, **Merlin**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, and **Killdeer**. Once in Paraiso, we began our search for another endemic, the **Hispaniolan Oriole**. Though we did find the bird, it was high up in a palm and mostly obscured, but we knew we would have other opportunities to see this bird. We also picked up **Great Blue Heron** and **Village Weaver** (an introduced species) this afternoon.

Our final stop for the evening was the beach, in the hopes of seeing the Endangered Black-capped Petrels flying in. We didn't get to see any petrels, but did pick up a **Sandwich Tern** and saw several **Royal Terns** in the distance. We then enjoyed a delicious home-cooked, traditional Dominican meal and topped off our dinner with ice cream, purchased from the house next door.

#### **Day 5: January 1 — Laguna de Oviedo (Jaragua National Park)**

Today we woke up to a very rainy morning. After a nice, home-made breakfast we drove to Laguna de Oviedo, located within the larger Jaragua National Park. As we drove, the rain dissipated and by the time we arrived at the lake, the rain had stopped, so we began our short boat ride into the mangroves. Unfortunately, about 40 minutes into our boat trip, it started to rain again. It began to come down quite heavily and we were all quickly soaked, despite having rain gear on. Though the

boat ride was short, we picked up two new species for the trip, the stunning **American Flamingo** and **White-cheeked Pintail**. After the boat ride, we stayed to watch some **Semipalmated Sandpipers** - also new for the trip - foraging in the nearby mudflats. We got back to the car soaking wet and made our way back to Paraiso. We made a quick stop at the shore and picked up another new species for the list - a **Black-bellied Plover** among the rocks. We then headed back to our lodging.

After a nice lunch at the beach, we headed up to the Cachote Cloud Forest and into the Monumento Natural Padre Domingo Fuerte. Our main target here was the **Eastern Chat-Tanager**. Unfortunately, the rain continued to come in alternating waves of light and heavy downpours. We pulled out Efrain's umbrella and all stood under it as we waited for the bird to appear. At our



**American Flamingos at Laguna de Oviedo. Photo by Marta Curti**

second stop, we caught an extremely quick glimpse of the bird flying across the road, but not much else. We definitely wanted better views. As we continued higher into the cloud forest, we began to pick up a few species. We saw a **Scaly-naped Pigeon** perched high up in a tree, spotted several more **Hispaniolan Woodpeckers**, two **Hispaniolan Spindalis**, and a **Narrow-billed Tody**. We also heard the lovely, plaintive calls of the Rufous-throated Solitaire. We tried calling the Eastern Chat-Tanager at a few more stops, with no luck. The rain had lessened and was now at a light drizzle. We finally arrived at the park guard station for the Monumento Natural Padre Domingo Fuerte. We parked our car and walked down the road. Finally, at around 6 p.m., Efrain spotted an **Eastern Chat-Tanager** in a small tree alongside the road. We were all able to get some quick looks at it before it flew off.

We then returned to the town of Paraiso and had a nice home-made dinner before returning to our lodging for the night.



## Day 6: January 2 — Paraiso, Monumento Natural Padre Domingo Fuerte, Barahona, and La Placa

Even before breakfast, we had another new bird for the trip. Efrain heard a waterthrush calling in a small drainage near where we parked the car. It turned out to be a lovely **Louisiana Waterthrush**. After breakfast, we returned to the Monumento Natural Padre Domingo Fuerte to try our luck at getting better views of the **Eastern Chat-Tanager**. And that we did! We were all able to see the bird and pick up on the details of its plumage, including the yellow eye ring. Happy with our sighting, we headed down the road. We made a stop at the port of Barahona. There we picked up another new species for the tour - **Laughing Gull**. We also saw **Royal** and **Sandwich terns**, and a beautiful **Great Blue Heron**. We continued on to the town of Duverge, enjoyed lunch and checked into our hotel. After a couple of hours rest, we headed toward La Placa. We picked up two more endemics - **Flat-billed Vireo** and **White-necked Crow**. We also got nice looks at a flock of about 20 **Hispaniolan Parakeets** and two **Hispaniolan Orioles**. We had an early dinner and got some rest in preparation for the long day ahead of us.

## Day 7: January 3 — Zapoten

Today was a long, but amazing day. We left our hotel quite early - at 3:30 a.m. en route to Zapoten. On the way, we picked up another owl species - the diminutive **Burrowing Owl**. We saw one fly across the road and then two perched on the power lines. They later flew down to a bank at eye level and we were able to get some nice looks. We then continued on to Puerto Escondido, where we met our local guide Rafael, and changed into a vehicle that could better handle the rough road ahead of us. As we climbed steadily toward Zapoten, the road got bumpier and bumpier. We finally made it to the guard station at around 5:50 a.m. It was still dark, so we enjoyed some hot coffee and tea while we listened to Hispaniolan Nightjars calling. The sunrise was lovely and just as it was getting light, a **Hispaniolan Nightjar** landed on a pine branch above us. We got quick looks before it flew off. Soon after, Rafael noticed a **La Selle Thrush** in the road. We watched it for a little while before it flew into the vegetation. By this time it was light enough for us to start our walk through the lovely forest. We immediately saw a **Western Chat-Tanager** flitting about on the ground, and began to hear the plaintive call of the **Rufous-throated Solitaire**.



An Antillean Piculet seen during our walk into Haiti. Photo by Marta Curti

This was perhaps the “birdiest” day of the trip so far! Along the hike, we got several new endemics and lifers including **White-winged Warbler** and **Hispaniolan Elaenia**. We got wonderful views of **Hispaniolan Pewee**, saw several **Hispaniolan Spindalis**, and **Hispaniolan Trogons**. We also picked up a new species for the trip, the **Black-faced Grassquit**. Though many of the birds were quite backlit, we managed to get good looks at most of the species. After a lovely morning, we began our walk back to the vehicle. We had a picnic breakfast at the guard station, where we saw an **Ovenbird**, a beautiful male **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, and several **Hispaniolan Spindalis** feeding on the berries of a nearby tree.

Though we didn’t want to leave this magical place, we had other species we wanted to seek out, so we piled back in the car and began the drive down the road. We spotted a **Yellow-faced Grassquit** on the way down - another new species for the trip. At our first stop, our goal was to find the sometimes elusive **Bay-breasted Cuckoo**. After only a few minutes of trying, first one and then a second cuckoo appeared. Though they didn’t sit still for too long, we all managed to have wonderful views of these beautiful birds.



One of several Olive-throated Parakeets seen as we were leaving Zapoten. Photo by Marta Curti

Our next stop carried with it a lovely surprise. Abby spotted **Olive-throated Parakeets** in the trees, so we quickly popped out of the car to get a look at them. Soon after, Efrain and Rafael heard **Key West Quail-Dove** calling close by. We were able to see two quail-doves calmly walking through the forest and got terrific views. When a horse walked by, they slowly wandered behind some trees, but shortly thereafter, they appeared again and remained for quite a long time. It was a lucky and lovely surprise.

Our final stop of the day was to search for another regional endemic - the **Loggerhead Kingbird**. Again, it wasn’t more than 15 minutes before two individuals flew in and landed at the top of a snag. It was a great way to end the morning. We returned to our hotel for lunch and a rest.

We headed out again at around 5 p.m. towards Puerto Escondido. We were able to get some nice looks at **White-necked Crows** and saw some **Hispaniolan Orioles** perched up in a tree





One of two Key West Quail-doves seen leaving Zapoten. Photo by Marta Curti

surrounding some local agricultural fields. The highlight of the evening came after dark when Efrain called in another endemic - the **Least Pauraque**! We saw at least two flying past us. But then Hamish spotted one land in a tree. As we searched for it, it flew again and landed on a nearby branch. Efrain pointed his flashlight at the bird and it remained just long enough for us to get some nice looks before it took off into the darkness again. We then headed back to town for a good dinner and a much deserved rest after another amazing day!

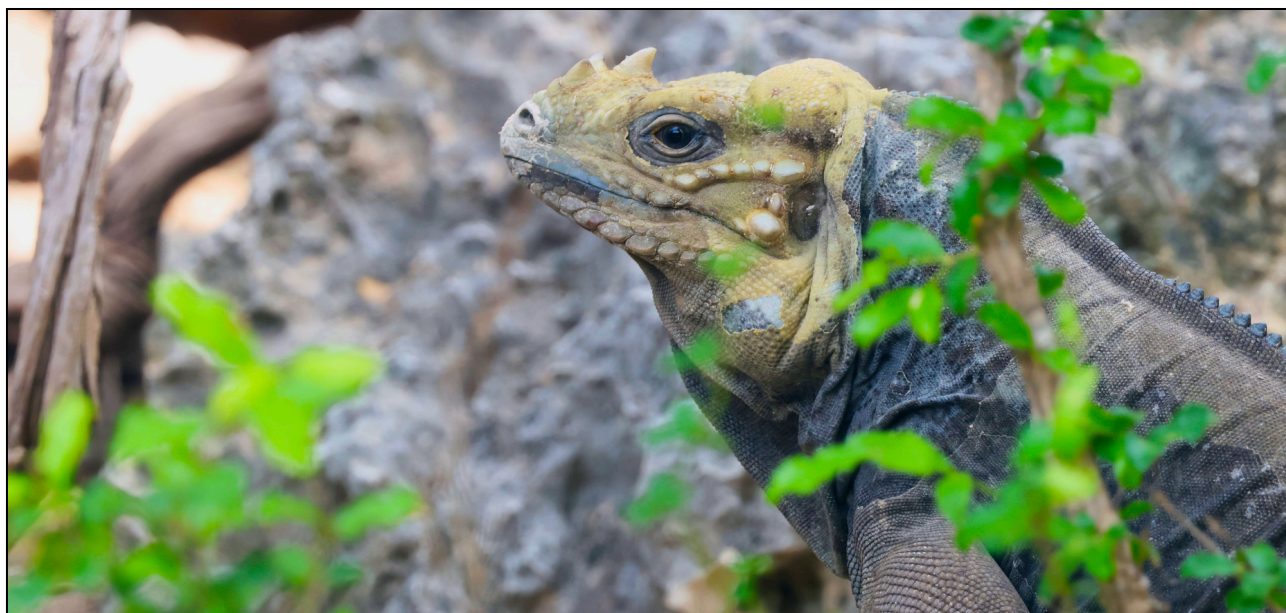
#### Day 8: January 4 — Puerto Escondido and Rabo de Gato

We had a relaxed morning today. We departed our hotel at 7:45 a.m. After breakfast, we headed towards Rabo de Gato for more birding. We made some stops along the way and got better views of a **White-necked Crow** perched in a palm tree. It was preening, so we were finally able to see its whitish neck feathers. Along the Rabo de Gato trail we were searching for Ruddy Quail-Dove. Hamish spotted movement in the forest, and Efrain caught a quick glimpse, but we didn't get to see this bird in the morning. However, we did add a few new birds to our list - and one of them (the latter) was a lifer for Efrain! We saw **Magnolia** and **Tennessee warblers**! We also got our first



One of many Broad-billed Todies seen during our tour. Photo by Marta Curti

**Yellow-throated Vireo** for the trip. Though we didn't see our target bird this morning, we were able to get some great looks at both the **Broad-** and **Narrow-billed todies**, and do a nice comparison of their characteristics. We saw several more **Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoos** and got good looks at a small flock of the introduced **Village Weavers**. We also made a stop along the road to try for Mangrove Cuckoo. Though we heard two calling, we weren't able to see them. On the way back to town, we stopped at a nearby watering hole and saw two endemic reptiles - the **Rhinoceros Iguana** and the **Hispaniolan Giant Ameiva**. We then returned to town for lunch and a rest at our hotel.



The endemic Rhinoceros Iguana. Photo by Marta Curti

We went out again in the afternoon, giving it one more shot to find some quail doves. Unfortunately, none appeared, though we did hear a Ruddy Quail-dove calling in the distance. However, we enjoyed our lovely walk along the Rabo de Gato dry forest trail. There were some lovely Zebra Longwing butterflies along the trail and some of us got nice looks at a **Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo**, a **Broad-billed Tody**, and a **Merlin** that flew across the path. We returned to town for a delicious dinner and then called it a night.

### Day 9: January 5 — Lago Enriquillo

On our last morning of the tour, we left our hotel just as it was getting light and drove to the edge of Lago Enriquillo. When we first arrived, we were met by a lovely double rainbow and the morning light was just spectacular. We walked a short trail to the lake's edge and enjoyed the scenery - the still water, the multitude of snags emerging from the water, and the golden sky. Though it wasn't too birdy, we did manage to pick up a few more species for our list, including **Caspian Tern**, **Osprey**, and **Common Yellowthroat**. After about an hour and a half exploring the edge of the lake, and finding lovely shells, we headed to another area to search for **Ricord's Rock Iguana**. After a bit of searching, Hamish spotted a large male which stayed still long enough for us to get nice looks and photographs.

We then returned to our hotel to grab our things. We had a nice breakfast and began the drive back to Santo Domingo. On the way, Efrain spotted one more bird for our list - the **White-collared Swift**. There were several flying above us. Once back in Santo Domingo, we said goodbye to



Efrain, who had been a wonderful guide and great company. We enjoyed a frozen yogurt, a stroll around the old town, and dinner before going back to our hotel for some much-needed rest.

### Day 10: January 6 — Punta Cana and Departure

We had a relaxing morning as we got ready to head to our next and final destination - Punta Cana. Carlos Suarez, of The Peregrine Fund, picked us up at our hotel and we drove to Punta Cana - the site of one of The Peregrine Fund's reintroduction program for the Critically Endangered Ridgway's Hawk. This species, of course, was our main target. Upon arriving, we walked a short trail to the observation tower, overlooking a water treatment plant. On the way, we got nice views of a beautiful **Cape May Warbler**, a male **Antillean Bullfinch**, and a **Vervain Hummingbird** perched at eye level and very close. Once at the top of the tower, we started to get several new species for our trip: **Least Grebe**, **Ruddy Duck**, and **American Coot**. We also saw large groups of **White-cheeked Pintails**, **Northern Shovelers**, and **Black-necked Stilts**. We loved seeing the **Turkey Vultures** soaring past us at eye level in beautiful light, and in the distance a **Red-tailed Hawk** soared past. Not soon after we lost sight of the Red-tail, we saw two **Ridgway's Hawks** soaring in the distance! We got to watch them flap, soar, and dive, though they were quite far away. Once they disappeared from our sight, we walked down the tower to get a closer look at the birds in the ponds. No sooner had we descended the tower than Carlos rang telling us there was a perched Ridgway's Hawk nearby. He kindly came and picked us up and sure enough, we saw a lovely female perched on a power pole. We got to watch her for several minutes, before she flew away into the trees.

Then, Carlos and Franklin Rodriguez, also of The Peregrine Fund, introduced the group to Leo, an Avian Ambassador Ridgway's Hawk. They explained how important these birds are to The Peregrine Fund's environmental education program and in changing people's hearts and minds about birds of prey.

After lunch, we took a walk to the beach and here we spotted one more bird for our list - a **Limpkin** crossing the road in front of us. We also got fabulous looks at the **Black-whiskered Vireo**, one we had been hoping to see again. **Common Ground Doves**, a **Hispaniolan Mango**, and **Prairie Warblers** all made appearances on our walk. We heard a Mangrove Cuckoo calling but never were able to see it. At the water's edge, we saw **Little Blue Herons**, **Brown Pelicans**, **Great**



Meeting The Peregrine Fund's Avian Ambassador, Leo, the Ridgway's Hawk. Photo by Marta Curti

**Egret**, and **Royal Tern**. Once back at the car, we completed our checklist for the trip and as a final goodbye, were serenaded by a **Bananaquit** and got the best views yet of the lovely **Hispaniolan Lizard-cuckoo** hopping around in a tree just in front of us. It was a great bird with which to end the trip. At around 4:30 p.m. it was time to return to the hotel in Santo Domingo for the early morning flight home.

## Thanks!

As always, we want to thank all the participants for being part of this tour. We also thank our great local guide, Efrain, who went above and beyond to make this an amazing experience for everyone. We thank Kenya, the wonderful chef who cooked us breakfast, lunch and dinner and who opened her home to us for some of those meals, since restaurants were closed on New Years Day. We thank Rafael Polanco, our wonderful local guide at Zapoten, Franklin Rodriguez and Carlos Suarez of The Peregrine Fund for sharing their love of raptors with us, and a special thank you to Carlos for alerting us about a nearby perched Ridgway's Hawk and picking us and bringing us right to the bird.

# Wildlife Observation List

## Birds

*Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Clements, J. F., T. S. Schulenberg, M. J. Iliff, D. Roberson, T. A. Fredericks, B. L. Sullivan, and C. L. Wood. 2018.*

Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
1 <b>West Indian Whistling-Duck</b>	<i>Dendrocygna arborea</i>	A pair seen at the Jardin Botanico Nacional, Santo Domingo
2 <b>Blue-winged Teal</b>	<i>Spatula discors</i>	A few seen in Cabo Rojo and Laguna Oviedo
3 <b>Northern Shoveler</b>	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	29 total seen in Cabo Rajo and in Punta Cana
4 <b>American Wigeon</b>	<i>Mareca americana</i>	A total of 5 seen near Pedernales
5 <b>White-cheeked Pintail</b>	<i>Anas bahamensis</i>	2 seen at Jardin Botanico Nacional, and at least 26 seen in Punta Cana
6 <b>Lesser Scaup</b>	<i>Aythya affines</i>	At least 17 seen in Punta Cana
7 <b>Ruddy Duck</b>	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	At least 15 seen in Punta Cana
8 <b>Helmeted Guineafowl</b>	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	5 seen near Cabo Rojo
9 <b>Rock Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba livia</i>	Several seen throughout the tour
10 <b>Scaly-naped Pigeon</b>	<i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>	Seen in Sierra de Bahoruco National Park and Monumento Natural Miguel Domingo Fuerte
11 <b>Plain Pigeon</b>	<i>Patagioenas inornata</i>	7 seen throughout the tour
12 <b>Eurasian Collared-Dove</b>	<i>Streptotelia decot</i>	3 seen in the Pedernales area
13 <b>Common Ground Dove</b>	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	Seen regularly throughout the tour



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
13	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	Seen regularly throughout the tour
14	Key West Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon chrysia</i>	2 seen in Naranjos
15	Zenaida Dove	<i>Zenaida aurita</i>	1 seen in El Aceitillar
16	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Several seen throughout the tour
17	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	Several seen throughout the tour
18	Bay-breasted Cuckoo	<i>Coccyges ruficularis</i>	2 seen in Naranjos
19	Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo	<i>Coccyges longirostris</i>	5 seen during the tour including in the Jardin Botanico Nacional, Rabo de Gato and Punta Cana
20	Least Parakeet	<i>Siphonorhis brewsteri</i>	1 seen well near Puerto Escondido
21	Hispaniolan Nightjar	<i>Antrostomus ekmani</i>	Seen in Pedernales and Zaptoen
22	White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>	A small flock seen from the road in Barahona
23	Antillean Palm Swift	<i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>	Seen regularly throughout the tour
24	Hispaniolan Mango	<i>Anthracothorax dominicus</i>	A total of 6 seen during the tour including in Punta Cana and the Jardin Botanico Nacional
25	Vervain Hummingbird	<i>Mellisuga minima</i>	A total of 9 seen including very close up views in Punta Cana
26	Hispaniolan Emerald	<i>Riccordia swainsonii</i>	6 seen on the tour, with great looks at one feeding on low flowers in El Aceitillar
27	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinule galena</i>	Commonly seen in lakes and wetlands
28	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	Seen in Punta Cana
29	Limpkin	<i>Aramas guarauna</i>	1 seen in Punta Cana
30	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	Over 100 seen, common in wetlands and lakes
31	Black-bellied Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	2 seen during the tour, along the coast and in Lago Enriquillo
32	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	A total of 7 seen during the tour, along shorelines during our drives and Lago Enriquillo
33	Short-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	Several seen during visits to the lagoon at Cabo Rojo
34	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	Seen at the lagoon at Cabo Rojo
35	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	4 seen during the tour including at Lago Enriquillo and Punta Cana
36	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	Seen at the lagoon at Cabo Rojo and Lago Enriquillo
37	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	Around 18 seen in Cabo Rojo, Laguna Oviedo, and Lago Enriquillo
38	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	Seen at the lagoon at Cabo Rojo and Lago Enriquillo
39	Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	A flock of around 10 seen at Laguna Oviedo

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
39	Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	A flock of around 10 seen at Laguna Oviedo
40	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	Seen along the coast in Baharona
41	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne cassia</i>	At least 14 seen at Lago Enriquillo
42	Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Seen near Baharona
43	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	Most common tern seen during the tour
44	American Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	A flock of six seen at Lago Oviedo
45	Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	5 seen in Punta Cana
46	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	6 seen during the tour along the coastlines
47	White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	1 seen in the lagoon at Cabo Rojo
48	Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	2 seen in the lagoon at Cabo Rojo
49	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egret caerulea</i>	Seen in Cabo Rojo, Laguna Oviedo, and Punta Cana
50	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Commonly seen in lagoons and wetlands
51	Reddish Egret	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	1 seen in the lagoon at Cabo Rojo
52	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	20 seen during the tour
53	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	8 seen during the tour in various lagoons and waterways
54	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	Seen commonly throughout tour in fields and waterways
55	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Seen commonly throughout tour in fields and waterways
56	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	7 seen throughout the tour, including in Laguna Oviedo and Lago Enriquillo
57	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	Seen at Cabo Rojo and Punta Cana
58	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Seen infrequently throughout the tour, with larger numbers in Punta Cana
59	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Seen at Lago Enriquillo
60	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	1 seen along Alcoa road
61	Ridgway's Hawk	<i>Buteo ridgwayi</i>	5 seen in Punta Cana
62	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	4 total seen during the tour including in Sierra de Bahoruco and Punta Cana
63	Ashy-faced Owl	<i>Tyto glaucops</i>	1 seen in Pedernales
64	Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	5 seen in Pedernales
65	Hispaniolan Trogon	<i>Priotelus roseigaster</i>	5 total seen during the tour including in El Aceitillar and Zapoten
66	Broad-billed Tody	<i>Todus subulatus</i>	6 seen throughout the tour including the Jardín Botánico Nacional, Lago Enriquillo, and Rabo de Gato



	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Notes</b>
67	<b>Narrow-billed Tody</b>	<i>Todus angustirostris</i>	Seen in the M.N. Miguel Domingo Fuerte, Zapoten, and Rabo de Gato
68	<b>Belted Kingfisher</b>	<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>	Seen at Lago Enriquillo and along the coast
69	<b>Antillean Piculet</b>	<i>Nesocittes micromegas</i>	Seen in Pedernales and at Fort Aguacate
70	<b>Hispaniolan Woodpecker</b>	<i>Melanerpes striatus</i>	Seen nearly every day of the tour
71	<b>American Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Often seen perched along power poles throughout tour
72	<b>Merlin</b>	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	
73	<b>Hispaniolan Amazon</b>	<i>Amazona ventralis</i>	Seen frequently throughout the tour
74	<b>Olive-throated Parakeet</b>	<i>Eupsittula nana</i>	Several seen in PN Sierra de Bahoruco
75	<b>Hispaniolan Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacara chloropterus</i>	Seen frequently throughout the tour
76	<b>Hispaniolan Elaenia</b>	<i>Elaenia cherriei</i>	Heard often during the tour, and 6 seen in Zapoten
77	<b>Hispaniolan Pewee</b>	<i>Contopus hispaniolensis</i>	5 seen throughout tour, including in Pedernales and Zapoten
78	<b>Stolid Flycatcher</b>	<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>	2 seen during the tour, at Fort Aguacate and Hoyo de Pelempito
79	<b>Gray Kingbird</b>	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	Seen frequently throughout the tour
80	<b>Loggerhead Kingbird</b>	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	2 seen in PN Sierra de Bahoruco
81	<b>Flat-billed Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo nanus</i>	2 seen on the Rabo de Gato trail
82	<b>Yellow-throated Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	1 seen along the Rabo de Gato trail
83	<b>Black-whiskered Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	Seen at the Jardin Botanic Nacional, and good looks at one in Punta Cana
84	<b>Hispaniolan Palm-Crow</b>	<i>Corvus palmarum</i>	17 total seen. Great looks at Sector Hoyo de Palempito (Sierra de Bahoruco)
85	<b>White-necked Crow</b>	<i>Corvus leucognaphalus</i>	About 12 total seen, mostly around Rabo de Gato
86	<b>Golden Swallow</b>	<i>Tachycineta euchrysea</i>	4 total seen at Sierra de Bahoruco and Zapoten
87	<b>Caribbean Martin</b>	<i>Progne dominicensis</i>	Seen in El Aceitillar and Lago Enriquillo
88	<b>Northern Mockingbird</b>	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	Seen commonly throughout the tour
89	<b>Rufous-throated Solitaire</b>	<i>Myadestes genibarbis</i>	Heard and seen in Zapoten
90	<b>Bicknell's Thrush</b>	<i>Catharus bicknelli</i>	1 seen at Zapoten
91	<b>Eastern Red-legged Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus ardosiaceus</i>	5 total, seen well at the Jardin Botanico Nacional and in Zapoten
92	<b>La Selle Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus swalesi</i>	Seen in Zapoten
93	<b>Palmchat</b>	<i>Dulus dominicus</i>	Seen often throughout the tour
94	<b>Village Weaver</b>	<i>Places cucullatus</i>	Seen well in PN Sierra de Baoruco

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
95	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Seen often throughout the tour
96	Hispaniolan Euphonia	<i>Chlorophonia musica</i>	Heard a few times, seen well at Zapoten
97	Hispaniolan Crossbill	<i>Loxia megaplaga</i>	Seen well in El Aceitillar
98	Antillean Siskin	<i>Spinus dominicensis</i>	Seen well at Zapoten
99	Western Chat-Tanager	<i>Calyptophilus tertius</i>	4 total seen during the tour including in El Aceitillar and Zapoten
100	Eastern Chat-Tanager	<i>Calyptophilus frugivorus</i>	3 seen in the Monumento Natural Miguel Domingo Fuerte
101	Black-crowned Palm-Tanager	<i>Phaenicophilus palm arum</i>	Seen frequently throughout the tour
102	White-winged Warbler	<i>Xenoligea montana</i>	2 seen at Zapoten
103	Green-tailed Warbler	<i>Microligea palustris</i>	Seen in PN Sierra de Bahoruco
104	Hispaniolan Spindalis	<i>Spindalis dominicensis</i>	9 total seen during the tour in Sierra de Baoruco
105	Hispaniolan Oriole	<i>Icterus dominicensis</i>	5 seen during the tour, with good looks near Rabo de Gato
106	Greater Antillean Grackle	<i>Quiscalus niger</i>	13 seen during the tour including at the Jardin Botanico Nacional, Laguna Oviedo, and Lago Enriquillo
107	Ovenbird	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	4 seen during the tour including in Zapoten, Rabo de Gato, and Punta Cana
108	Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia Motacilla</i>	1 seen in the town of Paraiso
109	Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	Seen at the Jardin Botanico Nacional, in Puerto Escondido, and PN Sierra de Bahoruco
110	Tennessee Warbler	<i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i>	1 seen during the tour
111	Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	1 seen at Lago Enriquillo
112	American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	Commonly seen throughout tour
113	Cape May Warbler	<i>Setophaga tigrinya</i>	Commonly seen throughout tour
114	Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	Seen regularly throughout the tour
115	Magnolia Warbler	<i>Setophaga magnolia</i>	3 seen along the Rabo de Gato trail
116	Northern Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>	2 seen in at the lagoon in Cabo Rojo
117	Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	Seen commonly in forests throughout the tour
118	Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>	3 seen throughout the tour
119	Pine Warbler	<i>Setophaga minus</i>	7 total seen including on Alcoa Road and Zapoten
120	Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	5 see in P.N. Sierra de Bahoruco
121	Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>	2 seen in P.N. Sierra de Bahoruco
122	Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>	4 seen during the tour including in Sierra de Baoruco and Punta Cana
123	Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>	1 seen at Zapoten



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
124	Banaquit	<i>Cerebra flaveola</i>	About 10 seen during the tour including in the Jardin Botanico Nacional, Zapoten, and Punta Cana
125	Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>	Seen mainly in Parque Nacional Sierra de Bahoruco
126	Greater Antillean Bullfinch	<i>Melopyrrha violacea</i>	A total of 2 seen in Pedernales and Punta Cana
127	Black-faced Grassquit	<i>Melanospiza bicolor</i>	3 seen in Zapoten

## Reptiles & Amphibians

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Notes
1	Curly-tailed Lizard	<i>Leiocephalus sp</i>	1 seen in Pedernales, Enriquillo
2	Rhinoceros Iguana	<i>Cyclura cornuta</i>	3 seen near Puerto Escondido
3	Ricord's Rock Iguana	<i>Cyclura ricordi</i>	1 seen well near Lago Enriquillo
4	Hispaniolan Great Ameiva	<i>Pholidoscelis chrysolaemus</i>	2 seen near Puerto Escondido



The Critically Endangered Ricord's Rock Iguana Photo by Marta Curti