

# The Broadwing



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## Message from the Editor April 2024

Dear Members and Friends,

The Montclair Bird Club will be celebrating a milestone—our 105th anniversary—in November of this year. We will have an in-person meeting to mark the occasion. In addition to the requisite cake and a balloon or two, we are looking for practical suggestions for other ways to celebrate. (Don't overlook the word "practical.") The earlier the responses, the more time we will have to plan.

Dues notifications will be sent over the summer. If you want to submit yours earlier, you can utilize the Venmo QR code on the website; checks are also welcome. You can pay for multiple years to save a check and a stamp.

Sandy

## In This Issue

Absence of Female Partners .....	2
Science News .....	3
Migrant Trap XIII .....	4
New Club Members .....	6
Field Trips .....	7
Field Trip Reports .....	10
Belize with Rick Wright .....	13
Virtual Bird Walks .....	59
Meeting History .....	61
Birds in This Issue .....	62

**Next club meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2024**  
**Virtual Bird Walk: Thursday, April 18, 2024**

## Absence of Female Partners May Explain the Dawn Chorus of Birds

by Diego Gil

Why birds sing intensely in a dawn chorus during the early morning has long been debated. Evidence gathered from observing birds in the wild offers a fresh perspective on what might drive this phenomenon.

Although it is widely recognized that solitude can boost artistic production, few people would have guessed that this might apply to animals, too. Writing in *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, Schlicht et al.<sup>1</sup> support this idea by showing that the intense dawn chorus of male birds can be explained by the absence of female partners.

The dawn chorus refers to a period in the morning, well known to early risers, when birds seem to engage in a frenzy of singing. Sometime before sunrise, particularly in spring, many species sing loudly simultaneously, and the result is an intense chorus that wanes when the sun rises. A similar, but less intense, peak of singing, known as the dusk chorus, occurs before the sun sets.



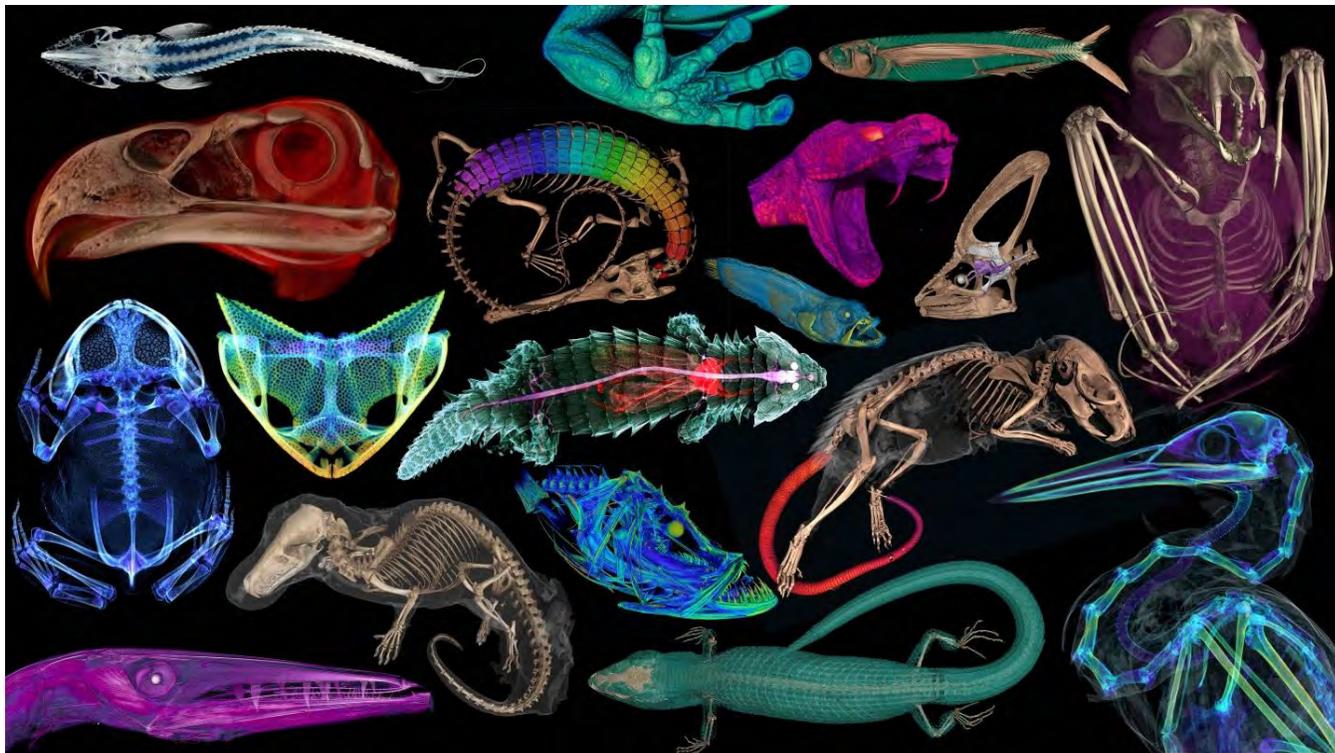
As common as it is, the dawn chorus of birds has puzzled people for centuries, and there is still no consensus regarding its cause. Ornithologists have proposed at least nine hypotheses, none of which seems to accommodate all the existing data<sup>2,3</sup>. The hypotheses with greatest support so far are those that propose that male birds sing at dawn to warn off competitors or to guard their mates at the peak of their fertility<sup>4</sup>, or that birds sing to re-establish territorial boundaries after the night<sup>5</sup>.

Other hypotheses provide more mechanistic explanations—for example, that dawn singing enables birds to use up the energy surplus that was stored for their needs at night<sup>6</sup> or that birds take the opportunity to sing at a time when predation levels are lower than usual<sup>3</sup>. Although some of these hypotheses do a good job of explaining particular patterns for various species, none of them seems to be applicable to all dawn chorus phenomena.

Full article: [Proceedings of the Royal Society](#)

## Science

### See 3D Models of Animal Anatomy from openVertebrate's Public Collection



**More than 13,000 museum specimens were CT scanned as part of a six-year-long project.**

These creatures are among more than 13,000 museum specimens that had their innards CT scanned as part of a six-year mission to create 3D digital reconstructions. The effort, called openVertebrate, or oVert, aims to make vertebrate specimens freely available online. Such specimens typically have been kept in storage until put on display for the public or pulled for examination by a specialist.

Online replicas not only make museum collections accessible to more people, but also give them a peek inside animals without the need for scalpels or other dissection equipment.

“The best part of that is the weird, wonderful things that you weren’t expecting to see that jump out,” says the evolutionary biologist Edward Stanley, of the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Those things include parasitic infections, last meals, and new insights into animal anatomy.

The full article in *BioScience*: [13,000 Invertebrates](#).

**Migrant Trap**  
**by Æneas Faber**  
**XIII**

I was on Phoebe's doorstep promptly at nine, and a cup of coffee later, my yellow pad and I settled down to prepare a list of the books on her shelves.

The library truly was a treasure. Obviously, Bob and his colleagues would be most interested in what we in the trade call "significant editions," the great nineteenth-century illustrated works of Gould and Wilson and Cuvier—not to mention, of course, Audubon's double elephants reposing on their backs in the low cabinet. But to my eye, the eye of a birder and a bookseller and a friend of Phoebe's, what was more striking was the plain care and knowledge with which the library's volumes had been assembled. Mr. Miller had been a serious birder by the standard of his day—of any day, for that matter—and for all their considerable bibliophile value, his books had obviously been purchased to be used. Splendid luxury editions and workaday field guides stood side by side on the mahogany shelves, scrupulously arranged by geography and taxonomy; this was clearly the library not of a collector but of a reader, and a reader who knew his subject well. Phoebe had done her part, too, acquiring the finest field guides and handbooks published since her father's death, and again and again I experienced a wave of nostalgic pleasure as I added to my list familiar volumes annotated in her fine, neat hand. Here was Phoebe's *Birds of the High Andes*, the very copy we gallant males had taken turns lugging for her on the Averno Bird Club's first trip to Peru—its binding slightly banged from my having dropped it in stunned amazement at our first crippling views of that most beautiful of larids, the Andean gull; and here her beloved Marchant and Prater, hard-used and the more precious for it, with her excited field notes filling the margins of the account of the ever-so-great knot. Faber and Co. had played a part in the formation of some outstanding birding libraries over the years; but of all the fine collections I knew, the one put together by Phoebe and her father was probably unparalleled in completeness and in its practical value to birders. It would be a priceless gift to the club.

Priceless, but far from valueless, as I forced myself to recall; mindful of my duties to Phoebe, the club, and the lawyers, I made careful notes of the condition and likely auction price of each volume.

There was virtually nothing on these shelves that would not bring something at least at public sale, and even leaving aside the Audubon, my notes showed the books to be worth somewhere



in the higher range of the respectable six figures. Impressive testimony to old Mr. Miller's taste and foresight, and to Phoebe's good judgment, as well; but certainly anything but the desired result if "depreciation" was the goal. There had to be another way that Phoebe could leave her property to the club that meant so much to her.

"Lunch, Andy?"

I hadn't even noticed the time pass; but it was nearly two o'clock, and hunger fell over me like a sharp on an overweight junco the instant I saw the tray Phoebe was carrying into the library. I didn't have to ask to know that the sandwiches would be on fresh-baked bread, with homemade vinegar mustard and slices of the season's first tomatoes from the tiny greenhouse in the side yard. And, inevitably, sugar cookies for dessert, stamped out with the custom-made cookie cutters Mr. Miller had had made for Phoebe's mother at the turn of the last century.



"Thank you, Phoebe; I had no idea it was this late. I'm at a good stopping point, though; except for you-know-who, I think I've got the appraisal pretty much done already."

"Good." Phoebe pushed a plate across the table to me. "Will Bob be pleased with the results?"



**To be continued**

## New Members

### 2023

#### January

Monica Cardoza                      Ridgewood, NJ  
 Susan & Michael Monaghan      Montclair, NJ  
 Anil & Seema Nerurkar            Wayne, NJ

#### February

Karen Nickeson                      Edgewater, NJ

#### March

Grace Friend                          Montclair, NJ  
 Camille Gutmore                    Nutley, NJ  
 Christie Morganstein                Randolph, NJ

#### April

Hillary Leonard                      Montclair, NJ  
 Kathrine McCaffery                 Maplewood, NJ  
 Kathy & Bob Wilson                Newton, NJ

#### May

Michael Yellin                         Montclair, NJ  
 Amanda & A. J. Tobia                Rockaway, NJ

#### June

Vicki Seabrook                        New York, NY

#### July

Michael Davenport                  Succasunna, NJ  
 Eileen Diaz                            Upper Montclair, NJ  
 Victor Go                                Bloomfield, NJ  
 Liz Hillyer  
 Marc Holzapfel  
 John Smallwood                        Randolph, NJ

#### August

Eric Knies                                Clifton, NJ  
 Diane Louie                             Madison, NJ  
 Roland Straton                        Montclair, NJ  
 Susan Sheldon                         Seattle, WA  
 Peter Rosario                          Patterson, NJ  
 Mary Conroy                            Montclair, NJ

#### October

Jimma Byrd                              TX

#### November

Diane Holsinger                      VA  
 Lauri Carlotti                         Belleville, NJ  
 Lisa Kroop                                Berkely Heights, NJ

#### December

Eva DeAngelis                         Franklin Lakes, NJ

### 2024

#### February

Samuel Crespo                         Clifton, NJ

#### March

Peter A. Axelrod                        Berkeley Heights, NJ  
 Sharon Gill                                Bloomfield, NJ

This list includes new members,  
 returning members, and  
 additions from our Friends  
 roster.

**Liberty State Park: Birds and Beer**  
***A Birder's Meetup***  
**Sunday, April 14, 2:00 pm**

We will meet at 2:00 in parking lot 3 at the south end of the park, on Morris Pesin Drive near the East Jetty (C on the map). The best access is from Exit 14B of the NJ Turnpike Extension. [See park map here.](#)

We will walk the paved Hudson River Walkway past Caven Point, about a mile each way. Expected birds include bufflehead, hooded and red-breasted mergansers, green-winged teal, American black duck, mallard, double-crested and perhaps great cormorants, brant, and early migrants. Scopes will be helpful. Restrooms are available at the park office.

We will bird for about 2-1/2 hours, after which those who are interested can meet for an early dinner at [Zeppelin Hall Beer Garden](#), featuring a wide selection of European and American beers, German sausages, and American barbecue.

For more information and to confirm attendance, please text or call Bill Beren at 862 283-8754.

**Paulinskill Wildlife Management Area (Hyper Humus)**  
**Thursday, April 25, 2024**  
**Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot at Warbasse Junction Road, Lafayette, NJ**

The ponds, marshes, and wooded areas of Paulinskill Wildlife Management Area (Hyper Humus) offer a range of habitats for plants, birds, and other animals. We will start along the Paulinskill River rail trail, then walk into Hyper Humus, looking for migrants, waterfowl, and nesting bald eagles. Last year, this field trip saw 39 species, including an abundance of yellow warblers, three swallow species, and a pair of bald eagles.



The trail is fairly flat, with occasional slight changes in elevation. Some spots might be wet if it has rained recently, so dress accordingly. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, water, and a snack. We will finish around noon.

From the Montclair area, take Route 80 west to Route 15 north, make a left turn onto Route 94 south, then left onto Warbasse Junction Road. The parking lot will be on your right just after the bridge. There is a bathroom here.

For more information or questions, write the trip leader, Karyn, at [kdc05@ptd.net](mailto:kdc05@ptd.net).



**South Mountain Reservation, West Orange, NJ**  
**Saturday, May 4, 2024**  
**(rain date: Sunday, May 15)**

Meet at 7:30 am in the main parking lot on Crest Drive (2nd on right; you'll see a wooden sign that says "Bramhall Terrace, entrance to Summit Field").

South Mountain Reservation is a 2,100-acre nature reserve in southern Essex County. Nestled between the first and second ridges of the Watchung Mountains and overlooking the urban sprawl of the greater Newark area, it can be a tremendous migrant trap in the heat of spring migration. We will walk several trails through the reservation and hope to see good numbers of warblers, thrushes, sparrows, and others taking advantage of the feeding opportunities in the reservation's varied habitats. Many of the trails are paved, but sturdy hiking boots are recommended, as some trails can be a little rocky and uneven.

There are no bathrooms at this location, but they are available at a later stop.

For more information, email us [mbcoutings@gmail.com](mailto:mbcoutings@gmail.com).

Directions from the Montclair area: From I-280, take Exit 7, Pleasant Valley Way, south for 3.5 miles, then turn left onto South Orange Avenue. Take this road for 1 mile and turn right onto Crest Drive, marked with a sign for the dog park (you will encounter Crest Drive just after you've reached the crest of the hill). Stay straight on Crest Drive, and within a half mile there will be a very long parking lot on the right, in an open space with a vista to your left. We will meet at the far end of this parking lot.

**Cold Brook Farm, Tewksbury, NJ**  
**Sunday, May 19, 2024, 8:30 am**  
**(Rain or shine—trip will take place unless it is pouring)**

Join us at Cold Brook Farm, the home of club members Deb and Jason DeSalvo. We will explore the fields, wooded areas, river, and wetlands on and bordering their property to discover the many different migratory and breeding bird species that use this restored property to refuel and to nest. Deb and Jason have been working hard to remove invasive plant species and plant native species to improve the habitat for insects, birds, and other animals, so it is a real treat to explore this bird-friendly habitat. Last year, on the NJ Audubon Big Day, they saw 53 species of birds.

Bring binoculars, a snack, and something to drink. If it has rained recently, waterproof boots are recommended.

Email [mbcoutings@gmail.com](mailto:mbcoutings@gmail.com) if you want to attend. Address and driving directions will be sent to you once you register.

## Field Trip Reports

### Barnegat Lighthouse

February 26, 2024

by Donna Traylor

Barnegat Lighthouse State Park in winter conjures up images of freezing temperatures, stiff winds, and sea spray hitting the jetty, making birding almost impossible. This was far from our experience this fair February day. Temperatures were in the balmy 50's with virtually no breeze and sunny skies. Eleven birders showed up to search for wintering ducks, alcids, and hardy passerines. We walked around the lighthouse path together and enjoyed the yellow-rumped warblers that seemed to be everywhere. Common and red-throated loons bobbed in the inlet with long-tailed ducks. Rick found a razorbill and got everyone on it—thank you!

Once we reached the jetty, the group split in two. Some elected to walk the beach while others carefully traversed the jetty. For once, the jetty walk was relatively easy, since it was dry and there were no waves being blown at us. Barnegat is the best place in New Jersey to view harlequin ducks, and today they did not disappoint. We did have to hike almost to the end of the jetty to find them close by, but there were several dozen that didn't seem to mind being photographic subjects. Several black scoters were seen zipping by, and red-breasted mergansers were common. It's always a treat to see great cormorants along the Jersey shore, and this day there were about ten hanging out on various buoys—their white patch was very evident. Sanderlings ran about on the beach. Ruddy turnstones were relatively common on the rocks of the jetty, allowing for close observation and pictures. Ipswich Savannah sparrows flitted about the beach and onto the jetty rocks, and we all got a good look at them. After walking for several

hours, the group headed back to the parking lot and checked out the bayside. Birds added to the list included great blue heron, American black duck, American wigeon, turkey vulture, and American oystercatcher. It was a lovely day of birding along Barnegat Bay—thanks to all who joined us!







Belize: Chan Chich Lodge and Crooked Tree  
March 2–9, 2024  
A trip report by Rick Wright



Belize—small, safe, Anglophone, and endowed with vast areas of intact forest—is a classic first tropical destination for the North American birder. Somehow, having visited most of the rest of Central America, I had never been there, a lapse made good this March when I co-led a special Victor Emanuel Nature Tours excursion designed for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

As we've all seen on our own travels, birding offers a dramatic insight into natural connections on a geographic scale. This delightful tour of Belize drove home the importance of the American tropics for "our" birds, which every winter return to their ancestral origins and join such beautiful residents as manakins, parrots, and a host of dazzling tanagers. We can consult authoritative books and such wondrous online tools as eBird as much as we want, but there is nothing like the sight of a Magnolia Warbler flitting about above the head of a Slaty-tailed Trogon, or watching Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes carefully picking their way through aquatic vegetation beneath a Rufous-tailed Jacamar, to convince us that the birds of the Americas, tropical and temperate, boreal and antarctic, can thrive only when the sites and resources they use across their entire range and through their entire life cycle remain intact.

*You can learn more about VENT's next tours of Belize [here](#).*



*Bird's Eye View Lodge, Crooked Tree, from the waters of the Northern Lagoon*

## Daily agenda

March 2: arrival at Bird's Eye View Lodge, 40 driving minutes north of the Belize City airport.

March 3: birding Crooked Tree and Bird's Eye View Lodge.

March 4: casual birding followed by a guided boat tour on the Northern Lagoon; postprandial birding in the nearby pine savanna.

March 5: a guided birding and archaeological tour of the ancient May city of Altun Ha; lunch followed by charter flight to Chan Chich, 20 minutes by air from the Belize City airport.

March 6: pre-breakfast birding in the lower service area and post-breakfast birding in the rear service area at Chan Chich Lodge; after lunch, birding the coffee plantation of Chan Chich in Gallon Jug.

March 7: pre-breakfast birding in the lower service area at Chan Chich Lodge; after breakfast, birding the forest trails; after lunch and a siesta, a birding drive around the pastures of Gallon Jug; after dinner, a night drive around Gallon Jug.

March 8: early birding around Chan Chich Lodge; breakfast followed by birding more of the many forest trails; after lunch, birding on Loggers Trail and service road.

March 9: casual birding around Chan Chich Lodge, followed by breakfast and charter flight to Belize City.

## **BIRDS OBSERVED**

### **Tinamous—Tinamidae**

**Great Tinamou, *Tinamus major*:** the weird, tremulous whistled song of this reclusive bird of the forest floor was occasionally heard morning and evening at Chan Chich. Among their other peculiarities, tinamous are famous for their colorful, glossy eggs.

### **Waterfowl—Anatidae**

**Black-bellied Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna autumnalis*:** small flocks of a dozen or so frequently overhead at Crooked Tree. Very widespread in tropical America, this species is rapidly expanding its range north on the Great Plains and mid-Atlantic coast of the US.

### **Guans—Cracidae**

**Plain Chachalaca, *Ortalis vetula*:** restricted in the US to southernmost Texas and Sapelo and Little St. Simons Islands (where it is introduced), this very vocal little cracid is common over much of Caribbean Central America. Our best looks were at Bird's Eye View, but we also heard and occasionally glimpsed chachalacas at Chan Chich.

**Crested Guan, *Penelope purpurascens*:** repeated excellent views of this enormous forest bird at Chan Chich. This arboreal species is rare overall except where, as at Chan Chich, it is protected from poaching.

**Great Curassow, *Crax rubra*:** a male on the entrance road to Chan Chich on our arrival. A magnificent forest guan and apparently a tasty one; it is declining over virtually its entire range. Note that this is among the birds whose scientific name describes the rusty-brown female: the earliest known English name is “Red Peruvian Hen.”

#### **New World Quail—Odontophoridae**

**Black-throated Bobwhite, *Colinus nigrogularis*:** sneaky like most of the bobwhites, this species is probably on the increase over much of its range thanks to the spread of agriculture in Belize, Honduras, and Nicaragua; we were so fortunate as to see four or five drop into the tall grass of a pasture at Gallon Jug.

#### **Pheasants and Grouse—Phasianidae**

**Ocellated Turkey, *Meleagris ocellata*:** one of the most colorful birds in the world, seen every day at Chan Chich in numbers up to a couple of dozen, feeding and gobbling unconcerned on the lawns and forest edges; this species has taken upon itself the task of welcoming planes landing on the airstrip at Gallon Jug. Its abundance at places like Chan Chich and Tikal notwithstanding, this enormous creature is considered near-threatened by the IUCN.



### **Grebes—Podicipedidae**

**Pied-billed Grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps*:** one or two seen several times in the shallow waters of the lagoon at Bird's Eye View. This familiar chunky waterbird has a vast range, breeding north to the Yukon and south to southern Argentina.

### **Pigeons—Columbidae**

**Feral Pigeon, *Columba livia*:** a few on wires in the Ladyville area. Pigeons were introduced to the Americas as a food source by Europeans in the early seventeenth century, and are abundant in many urban and agricultural landscapes, especially in the US.

**Pale-vented Pigeon, *Patagioenas cayennensis*:** a big, somber pigeon usually seen in flight in the morning or evening; our best views of perched birds were along the entrance road to Bird's Eye View. Belize is near the northern edge of this species' breeding range; it occurs south to Argentina.

**Scaled Pigeon, *Patagioenas speciosa*:** small numbers of this big, boldly scalloped dove were seen at both Gallon Jug and Chan Chich Lodge.

**Red-billed Pigeon, *Patagioenas flavirostris*:** another large columbid, more often heard than seen and more often seen high overhead than perched; our best views were of birds sharing a Gallon Jug tree with White-tailed Kites. Though the base of the bill is reddish, the scientific name (“yellow-billed”) is a better description than the English. Restricted to Middle America, a few breed in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and a winter bird might someday stray to southeast Arizona. In Belize, the species was rare until the 1960s; since then, it has established itself as a fairly common resident over most of the country.

**Short-billed Pigeon, *Patagioenas nigrirostris*:** somewhat smaller than the other *Patagioenas* doves, but still a good-sized bird, with a characteristic gulping song. We heard Short-billed Pigeons frequently at Chan Chich, with the best views given by an early morning singer perched high above the reception building.

**Blue Ground Dove, *Claravis pretiosa*:** one seen at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Common Ground Dove, *Columbina passerina*:** heard and seen by some of us at Bird’s Eye View. The English name notwithstanding, this is generally the much less abundant bird where both this and the Ruddy Ground Dove occur.

**Ruddy Ground Dove, *Columbina talpacoti*:** a beautiful little pigeon, common to abundant in many areas from Mexico south to northern Argentina; in the US, it is a regular winter visitor and scarce and infrequent breeder in Arizona, with records from Texas as well. We saw pairs every day at Bird’s Eye View, where the rapid, monotonous upslurred song was a constant part of the sonic backdrop. The species name *talpacoti* is based on a Nahuatl name meaning “red dove.”

**Ruddy Quail Dove, *Geotrygon montana*:** three or four were tallied during our stay at Chan Chich Lodge. This large, very secretive forest pigeon is usually hard to see, but for one of the groups, one flashed across the trail below the dining room at Chan Chich.

**White-tipped Dove, *Leptotila verreauxi*:** heard and occasionally seen at and around Bird’s Eye View. Familiar to many from the Texas population, this species of brushy pasture and forest edge ranges all the way south to Uruguay and Argentina. The song is famously described as the sound of breath across an empty bottle.

**Gray-headed Dove, *Leptotila plumbeiceps*:** heard a few times at Chan Chich. The *Leptotila* pigeons are all very similar, visually and vocally, but this species can be recognized by its extremely low-pitched song that lacks the appoggiatura of the White-tipped’s.

**White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica*:** very common at Bird’s Eye View, with an incubating bird above one of the walkways. The popping, syncopated song is a classic sound of hot afternoons.

### **Cuckoos—Cuculidae**

**Groove-billed Ani, *Crotophaga sulcirostris*:** this poorly constructed black cuckoo, with a tail that always seems only precariously attached, was common on the roadsides from Ladyville to

Bird's Eye View, where we also saw small groups in the vegetation of the Northern Lagoon. Like many members of its family, this species has evolved a peculiar breeding system, in this case one that involves the formation of breeding groups that lay all their eggs in a single communal nest.

**Squirrel Cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*:** heard and seen frequently at both Bird's Eye View and Chan Chich. At the moment, the Squirrel Cuckoo is considered a polytypic species, occupying virtually all of the American tropics, but the four generally recognized subspecies groups—differing chiefly in size and the color of the belly and soft parts—likely represent at least two species.

### Nightjars—Caprimulgidae

**Common Pauraque, *Nyctidromus albicollis*:** a familiar but dashing tropical nightjar, often seen hunting at night on sidewalks or beneath streetlamps. We saw them almost every day at both Bird's Eye View and Chan Chich, where their “werewolf howl” was frequently heard at night.

**Yucatan Poorwill, *Nyctiphrynus yucatanicus*:** seen by one of the vehicles on our night drive at Gallon Jug. More arboreal than the pauraque, this species is much harder to see, at night or in the daytime.

### Potoos—Nyctibiidae

**Northern Potoo, *Nyctibius jamaicensis*:** two fencepost-perched birds on our night drive at Gallon Jug, one of which permitted extraordinarily close approach. Potoos, like the only distantly related frogmouths of Australia and Wallacea, are masters of camouflage, nearly impossible to distinguish from the stumps and stubs where they perch; one of our group pointed out that the bird at Gallon Jug bore an almost perfect resemblance to a wooden carving, and there are many accounts of a weary hiker reaching out to a broken tree for support only to have the top fly away on huge brown wings.

### Swifts—Apodidae

**Vaux's Swift, *Chaetura vauxi*:** small numbers seen high overhead at Chan Chich. The Vaux's-type swifts of Central America are at present generally considered conspecific with the birds breeding in the American Northwest, but some progressive taxonomic authorities split the southerly breeders as the Richmond's Swift.

**Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, *Panyptila cayennensis*:** this is a handsome and dashing little swift, but unfortunately rarely seen other than at an intimidating height. We were able to pick birds out on a couple of occasions at Chan Chich; they are often more readily identified by their long, pointed tail than their elegant black and white plumage. This species is usually detected as no more than three or four birds at a time, suggesting that its global population may be small.

### Hummingbirds—Trochilidae

**White-necked Jacobin, *Florisuga mellivora*:** probably the commonest and most certainly the most conspicuous trochilid around Chan Chich, where half a dozen birds were in constant attendance on the feeders and no walk in the woods went unaccompanied by at least one, whether curious or aggressive. The densely speckled females are attractive, but the sharply patterned green, blue, and white plumage of adult males and some adult females is breathtaking. These colorful birds are extremely jealous of their nectar resources, keeping watch over each feeder and violently driving away all intruders.



**Long-billed Hermit, *Phaethornis longirostris*:** at least one of these large, long-tailed hummingbirds was a persistent visitor to the feeders at Chan Chich, where it usually managed a sip or two before being expelled by the jacobins. Hermits are generally retiring, often modestly plumaged birds; this species does not guard a particular feeding spot (such as a feeder), but engages in “traplining,” following a regular route between nectar sources but not persistently defending any. This and other hermits also perform at leks, display grounds on which males sing in the attempt to secure the best perch and as many females as possible.

**Stripe-throated Hermit, *Phaethornis striigularis*:** a small, short-billed hermit, generally shyer and less common than the Long-billed; at least one paid regular visits to the feeders at Chan Chich, and we occasionally found individuals in the forests, too.

**Purple-crowned Fairy, *Heliathryx barroti*:** one of the most beautiful of the entire beautiful family, with flashing white underparts and tail contrasting with the deep emerald and plum of the upperparts. We witnessed a few visits to the feeders, but this species is more easily found “in the wild,” where the birds at Chan Chich appeared to favor the nectar of the abundantly blooming small tree we were told was called “madre de cacao.” The name “fairy” is a relic of a classification system that charmingly divided hummingbirds into fairies, nymphs, sylphs, and elves.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*:** we encountered a couple of females at Bird’s Eye View, while the individuals we saw at Chan Chich included at least one genuinely ruby-throated male. The first northbound migrants likely reached Texas and Louisiana just a few days after our time in Belize ended.

**Green-breasted Mango, *Anthracothorax prevostii*:** the bizarre English name of the large tropical hummingbirds known as mangos is apparently the result of an eighteenth-century mix-up between these birds and certain eastern oriolids; see [repository.si.edu/bitstream/handle/10088/21899/vz\\_Jamaican\\_mango.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.si.edu/bitstream/handle/10088/21899/vz_Jamaican_mango.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y). Our first was a female on a nest along the entrance road to Bird’s Eye View; we saw others, including both females and (less attractive) males, out on the nearby pine savanna. This species has strayed as far north as Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, a startling reminder of the potential for far-flung vagrancy on the part of even the smallest birds.



**Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, *Phaeochroa cuvierii*:** this big, relatively plain hummingbird of Central and northernmost South America is easily overlooked in the company of flashier trochilids at feeders or in flowering trees. We saw several over our time at Chan Chich, most of them taking nectar and perhaps insects from blossoming trees. The subspecies *roberti*, resident in Belize, is sometimes recognized as a distinct species.



**Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, *Amazilia tzacatl*:** perhaps more common than the jacobin at Chan Chich, but smaller and less vehemently aggressive, this common tropical bird would be easy to pass by if not for its persistent ticking calls and flashing reddish tail. Individuals were almost always in sight from the dining room porch, but they fed much more in the trees than at the feeders. Tzacatl, we are told, was one of the military leaders of the Toltecs.

**White-bellied Emerald, *Chlorestes candida*:** spectacular views of a perched bird on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich.

**Rails—Rallidae**

**Russet-naped Wood Rail, *Aramides albiventris*:** common and, with patience, easily seen at Bird's Eye View, where one family with six or seven tiny black chicks was seen several times. The extremely few documented observations of breeding birds suggest that nesting may take place at almost any time of year. This handsome bird was long considered conspecific with the Gray-cowled Wood Rail, *A. cajaneus*, under the name Gray-necked Wood Rail; the Gray-cowled is the southern member of this species pair.



**Common Gallinule, *Gallinula galeata*:** a few seen on the Northern Lagoon during our boat trip from Bird's Eye View. At times, this bird has been considered conspecific with the Common Moorhen of the Old World, but the two differ consistently in vocalizations and, more subtly, in the conformation of the forehead shield.

**American Coot, *Fulica americana*:** one seen on our Northern Lagoon boat trip, and another from the vehicle a day later. There are disjunct breeding populations of this very widespread rail in northern South America, but it appears to be only a winter visitor to Belize.

**Ruddy Crake, *Laterallus ruber*:** one heard on our Northern Lagoon boat trip.

**Yellow-breasted Crake, *Hapalocrex flaviventer*:** an instant's view of a bird flashing across the narrow channel on our Northern Lagoon boat trip; sadly but unsurprisingly, the tiny rail could not be found in the grass where it landed, and it did not respond to judicious playback (which instead stimulated a nearby, if equally invisible, Ruddy Crake to call loudly).

### **Limpkin—*Aramidae***

**Limpkin, *Aramus guarauna*, the Montclair Bird Club 2024 Bird of the Year:** common on the swampy edges of the Northern Lagoon, where we saw more than a dozen, perched and in flight. The subspecies resident in Belize, *dolosus*, is smaller and less heavily marked than the

birds found farther north. This tropical relative of the cranes has undergone a shocking range expansion to the north in the past three years, with records of this “Florida specialty” from as far north as Wisconsin and New York; the steady northward advance of the invasive golden apple snail may help the limpkin establish breeding populations well to the north of its limited historical range.

### **Plovers—Charadriidae**

**Killdeer, *Charadrius vociferus*:** single birds tallied at Bird’s Eye View and at Altun Ha.

### **Jacanas—Jacanidae**

**Northern Jacana, *Jacana spinosa*:** this weird and noisy shorebird, with its yellow wings, impossibly long toes, and colorfully ornamented forehead, was almost never out of sight and sound at Bird’s Eye View. A pair on the lawn there produced chicks during our stay, and on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, we saw large fledglings, half-grown chicks, and newly hatched downies under the care of the male parent; in this species, females may mate with as many four males, which then build the nest, incubate the eggs, and raise the tiny members of the new generation.



## Sandpipers—Scolopacidae

**Least Sandpiper, *Calidris minutilla*:** a small flock, eight or ten birds, were constant and tame visitors to the water's edge at Bird's Eye View, allowing the usual close approach for excellent looks at this subarctic breeder. The yellow feet are a classic field mark, but with such good views, we learned to concentrate instead on the very fine-tipped bill and junco-like plumage pattern.



**Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*:** one or two almost always in sight at Bird's Eye View, bobbing and dipping without any apparent interest in our admiring presence.

**Solitary Sandpiper, *Tringa solitaria*:** one roadside bird at Bird's Eye View, quietly feeding in the shade with a cautious eye on the activities of the pigs sharing its muddy pond.

## Terns—Laridae

**Caspian Tern, *Hydroprogne caspia*:** one over the water Bird's Eye View.

## Storks—Ciconiidae

**Jabiru, *Jabiru mycteria*:** two in flight over Bird's Eye View on our first morning walk there, distant but magnificent. This largest of American storks has an 8.5-foot wingspan and weighs up to eighteen pounds; small wonder that nervous Spanish soldiers during the Venezuelan war of independence found them intimidating (see [birdaz.com/blog/2021/07/05/venezuelan-independence-and-the-soldier-heron](http://birdaz.com/blog/2021/07/05/venezuelan-independence-and-the-soldier-heron)). This species is probably most closely related to the Australasian Black-necked Stork, which is also sometimes called “jabiru.”

**Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*:** surprisingly few on this visit, with just the odd one or two standing on wet pastures or, more often, soaring overhead.

## Darters—Anhingidae

**Anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga*:** common on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, seen both perched and in flight, when its unusual long-tailed silhouette gave sense to the old name “Water Turkey” for this relative of the cormorants. The remarkably thin neck, bill, and head are responsible for the equally ancient moniker “Snakebird.”

## Cormorants—Phalacrocoracidae

**Neotropic Cormorant, *Nannopterum brasilianum*:** very common on the Northern Lagoon, with flights of a couple of hundred passing Bird's Eye View every evening and large squadrons swimming up and down the lagoon in a cooperative hunt for fish; those concentrations attracted human fishermen hoping to share in the birds' good luck. This is among the southern species most decidedly on the move north, with regular occurrences on the northern Great Plains and on the Atlantic Coast as far as New Jersey.

## Hérons—Ardeidae

**Bare-throated Tiger Heron, *Tigrisoma mexicanum*:** a large and spectacular heron, juveniles with black and orange stripes and all ages with an unsettling cat-like roar. Tiger herons are relatively secretive, but I believe that all of us eventually had good looks; the most memorable view was of an immature bird that flew in to land on an open pasture at Gallon Jug, imposingly big and bulky among the Cattle Egrets. There are a few recent records of this species from Texas, and it can probably be expected to occur again along the Mexican border.

**Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*:** common at Bird's Eye View, though less confiding than some of the smaller heron species and more often seen as a distant fly-by. This is a very commonly encountered winter visitor in Belize, but the species' status there as a breeder is unclear.

**Great Egret, *Ardea alba*:** small numbers in virtually all wet habitats, but commonest on the Northern Lagoon, as expected. If all populations are considered conspecific, this is one of the world's most widespread herons, breeding on six continents and expanding its range and numbers in many regions, including North America and western Eurasia.

**Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*:** small numbers at Bird's Eye View, though it was not always possible to determine with certainty the exact species composition of distant flocks of white herons. The quite similar Little Egret is in the process of colonizing the Caribbean, and can be expected to occur in coastal Belize.

**Little Blue Heron, *Egretta caerulea*:** quite common at Bird's Eye View, though it was not always possible to determine with certainty the exact species composition of distant flocks of white herons, most of which were probably juveniles of this species. Normally shy, Little Blue Herons were almost constant visitors to the edge of the water just below the lodge, giving amazingly close views of a very handsome bird.

**Tricolored Heron, *Egretta tricolor*:** a few on the Northern Lagoon, but far less common than the Little Blue Heron or Snowy Egret. Unlike those birds, Tricoloreds were seen mostly at a distance, though one or two did feed on water's edge at the lodge. The three colors that give this bird its name are black, blue, and white; see [birdaz.com/blog/2012/08/16/the-louisiana-egret-more-than-anyone-could-possibly-want-to-know/](http://birdaz.com/blog/2012/08/16/the-louisiana-egret-more-than-anyone-could-possibly-want-to-know/).

**Western Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*:** abundant throughout, associating with livestock or just striding through the tall grasses in search of insects and other small prey. Cattle Egrets arrived in the Caribbean region around the turn of the twentieth century, and within seventy years seemed to have conquered much of the North American continent; over the past couple of decades, however, their range and numbers in the north have shrunk, and it is possible that this will once again become a largely tropical species. The longer-legged, longer-billed, and more colorful cattle egrets of Australasia are now regarded by most authorities as making up a distinct species, the Eastern Cattle Egret.

**Green Heron, *Butorides virescens*:** excellent views of many individuals of this colorful little heron on our Northern Lagoon boat trip, probably comprising both migrants from the US and resident Belizean breeders. Even those of us less familiar with the species quickly came to recognize the bright feet, deeply colored plumage, and fast wingbeat. Though many of the upperpart feathers are thinly edged greenish, in the field Green Herons are strikingly blue, white, and chestnut; see [birdaz.com/blog/2014/06/14/its-not-easy-seeing-green/](http://birdaz.com/blog/2014/06/14/its-not-easy-seeing-green/). In the past, this bird has sometimes been "lumped" as a single species with the grayer Striated Heron.

**Black-crowned Night Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*:** three or four seen on our Northern Lagoon boat trip; given this species' largely nocturnal habits and fondness for densely vegetated roost sites, it is likely that there were many more to be found on the tiny wooded islands. Band recoveries suggest that many of the Black-crowned night herons wintering in Belize are from breeding populations in the upper Midwest of the US.

**Yellow-crowned Night Heron, *Nyctanassa violacea*:** surprisingly scarce, with a lovely immature bird seen on our Northern Lagoon boat trip and an adult spotlighted at Gallon Jug. This species breeds in Belize, and the population is probably increased in the winter by migrants from the US. The genus name is one of the most evocative given any bird, "the night queen."

**Boat-billed Heron, *Cochlearius cochlearius*:** our local guides were able to show us several roosts of these comical, slipper-billed creatures on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon. Boat-billeds are even more nocturnal than the night herons, and have the pleasing habit of sitting tight when disturbed during the day, usually moving not at all or just a few feet up in the densely leafed trees they prefer. The weird bill is used to scoop up prey in shallow water.

### **Ibises—Threskiornithidae**

**White Ibis, *Eudocimus albus*:** quite common at Bird's Eye View, most often seen in flight but also observed feeding quietly along the water's edge below the lodge. Apparently always common in Florida, White Ibis have rapidly increased in the eastern US, and the species has been breeding in considerable numbers in New Jersey since 2020, while single-site tallies in Delaware have exceeded 300 individuals.

**Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*:** a total of no more than 10 individuals at Bird's Eye View, seen overhead and feeding below the lodge. This species apparently arrived in Belize in the 1960s or 1970s, after colonizing the New World from Africa in the late eighteenth century; it remains uncommon in the southern Caribbean, but is explosively spreading and increasing north of Mexico, with recent breeding records from many inland sites in the US.

### **New World Vultures—Cathartidae**

**King Vulture, *Sarcoramphus papa*:** a huge vulture, beautifully black and white when adult and smudgy grayish black when immature, as the first individual we saw at Chan Chich. We would see one to four, mostly adults, on each of our days there. This splendid bird is widespread in Central and South America; early reports from Florida may refer to a now-extinct relative. The English name "king" and similar names in many other languages are self-explanatory, but Linnaeus's decision to assign the bird a species epithet meaning "pope" appears to be an instance of the great classifier's rather bitter sense of humor; see [birdaz.com/blog/2013/03/15/the-avipope](http://birdaz.com/blog/2013/03/15/the-avipope).

**Black Vulture, *Coragyps atratus*:** abundant throughout except in the most densely forested areas. This bold, even aggressive vulture now ranges from southern New England to southern Chile.

**Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*:** abundant throughout except in the most densely forested areas. This common and familiar bird has an even wider distribution than the Black Vulture, occurring from Atlantic to Pacific as far north as Canada and as far south as Tierra del Fuego.

**Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, *Cathartes burrovianus*:** closely related and extremely similar to the Turkey Vulture, this tropical specialty was seen every day in small numbers during our stay at Bird's Eye View, often close enough and low that we could appreciate the ornately patterned head.

## Ospreys—Pandionidae

**Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*:** common and almost constantly in view at Bird's Eye View, hunting the shallow waters of the Northern Lagoon. All seen well were of the expected migrant taxon *carolinensis*, identified by its strong dark facial markings; the white-headed *ridgwayi*, treated by some authorities as a distinct species, the Caribbean Osprey, is essentially restricted to the cayes in Belize. Taken together, these and the nominate Eurasian subspecies are sometimes split from the Australasian Eastern Osprey, *P. h. cristatus*.

## Hawks—Accipitridae

**White-tailed Kite, *Elanus leucurus*:** a fine adult White-tailed Kite was one of the first birds we saw on stepping out of the plane at Gallon Jug; our afternoon drive there produced astoundingly good views of a pair in flight, perched, and ultimately settled on their nest visible at the top of a tall, isolated tree. Even when the elegant plumage patters cannot be seen in detail, this species' habit of hunting rodents by hovering, wings held nearly vertical, above grassy fields is distinctive at any distance. This species was once considered conspecific with the similar Black-winged Kite of Asia and Europe. The English name "kite" is of unknown origin; what is certain is that the flying toy was named for the bird, not the bird for the toy.

**Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*:** one of the world's most beautiful and most graceful birds, stunningly black and white with sharp-pointed wings and the eponymous deeply forked tail. We saw this species only a couple of times, soaring high overhead. Swallow-tailed Kites feed on small vertebrates taken from treetop foliage (when capturing young birds, they sometimes take the entire nest with them) and on insects captured in flight or on the ground. This species formerly bred as far north as Nebraska and Minnesota, and recent observations at midwestern hawkwatches raises hopes that it may do so again.

**Black Hawk Eagle, *Spizaetus tyrannus*:** heard over Chan Chich Lodge, a pair giving their distinctive repeated whistles.

**Ornate Hawk Eagle, *Spizaetus ornatus*:** two adults seen well soaring over Chan Chich Lodge, readily identified by the long tail, "pinched-in" wings, white throat, and rusty neck. We were never so fortunate as to see this truly ornate raptor perched, though at least three nest sites are known from Chan Chich and the immediate surroundings.

**Black-collared Hawk, *Busarellus nigricollis*:** we found these spectacular tropical birds of prey exactly where one might expect, namely, hunting and roosting above the shallow waters of the North Lagoon. A couple were seen right from Bird's Eye View, but the most dramatic sightings were of apparent pairs on our boat trip, their white heads and bright rusty body plumage unmistakable at any range. Appropriately for a bird that survives mainly on fish and frogs, Black-collared Hawks are docile, even sluggish, and as we found, they often allow very close approach.



**Snail Kite, *Rostrhamus sociabilis*:** this dashing bird was far and away the most abundant raptor on the North Lagoon, where we saw well more than a dozen on our morning boat trip. True to their name, these floppy-winged kites sustain themselves almost exclusively on snails, and several times we saw them capture and eat large apple snails, taking them from the low vegetation of the lagoon. They are extremely gregarious, often nesting in loose aggregations and sleeping in roosts comprising up to 400 individuals. In the US, where it was formerly known as the Everglad Kite, this species is uncommon and restricted to Florida; it remains to be seen whether it will follow the northward advance of the invasive channeled apple snail.

**Double-toothed Kite, *Harpagus bidentatus*:** at least two pairs seen soaring high over the forest at Chan Chich. With their long tails and rounded wings, Double-toothed Kites can be quite accipiter-like in flight. The English and scientific names both refer to the twin notches on the upper mandible, generally invisible to human eyes in the field. The genus name *Harpagus*, “violent snatcher,” rather exaggerates the aggressiveness of this species, which for the most part eats insects captured in the forest interior.

**Plumbeous Kite, *Ictinia plumbea*:** closely related to the Mississippi Kite, two of these birds floated in and perched during our visit to the Chan Chich coffee plantation. The barred tail and rusty primaries quickly distinguish it from that species. Plumbeous Kites winter in South

America, returning to Belize to breed beginning in February; hopeful birders in Texas look for “overshoots” every spring, so far to no avail.

**Northern Harrier, *Circus hudsonius*:** we saw this species twice, with a total of at least three individuals, floating on long wings over the fields near the Gallon Jug airstrip. All were brown birds—it is said that most wintering harriers in Belize are juveniles. North America is impoverished in harriers, with just one of the world’s 16 species regularly occurring here.

**Great Black Hawk, *Buteogallus urubutinga*:** one distant bird overhead at Chan Chich. This species is less bound to wetland habitats than the Common Black Hawk, and thus the more expected of the two in the dense forests of the area. As of early 2024, only one Great Black Hawk has been definitively identified north of the Rio Grande; it eventually wandered from Texas to Maine, where it succumbed to frostbite.

**Roadside Hawk, *Rupornis magnirostris*:** scattered birds at both Bird’s Eye View and Chan Chich, with others, inevitably, on the roadsides. This is a very handsome little hawk, midway between accipiters and buteos in overall appearance and shape. Records have become more frequent in Texas in recent years, and it is likely that this confiding and conspicuous bird will join the ranks of US breeding birds soon.

**White Hawk, *Pseudastur albicollis*:** one was chased by a Roadside Hawk right in front of one of our groups atop the Upper Plaza of Chan Chich; another was seen from above over the vast forests on our return flight to Belize City. The whiter White Hawks of Middle America are sometimes split from the more heavily marked populations of cis-Andean South America, making Belize’s species the Northern or Snowy White Hawk, *Pseudastur ghiesbreghti*, named for the Belgian naturalist Auguste Boniface Ghiesbreght, who collected the first specimen in Mexico in the late 1830s.

**Gray Hawk, *Buteo plagiatus*:** spectacularly close views of an adult in the coffee plantation at Chan Chich, perched on the edge of the forest just as this species does on its broad nesting grounds in Canada and the eastern US. The very similar Gray-lined Hawk “replaces” this species from Costa Rica south; the two have been considered conspecific, but at the moment are treated as distinct.

**Short-tailed Hawk, *Buteo brachyurus*:** a couple seen overhead at both Crooked Tree and Chan Chich; this is usually one of the commonest and most frequently encountered raptors in Central and South America. In the US, this bird has historically been a “Florida specialty,” but sightings and nesting records are accumulating at an increasing rate in the Southwest. Light-morph and dark-morph birds occur in roughly similar numbers in Belize; dark individuals predominate in Florida, light individuals in Texas and Arizona.

### **Barn Owls—Tytonidae**

**Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*:** at present, this beautiful white owl is widely understood as a single species comprising more than two dozen subspecies, breeding on six continents; some authorities split the American birds as *T. furcata*, the American Barn Owl. We had wonderful close views of a bird perched at close range on a roadside fencepost during our night drive.

## Owls—Strigidae

**Central American Pygmy Owl, *Glaucidium griseiceps*:** vexingly tiny, and vexingly given to perching motionless high in the dense foliage of the dark forest, one of these birds sang and then gave a few of us a vexingly brief look as it shot across the road above us at Chan Chich.

**Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, *Glaucidium brasilianum*:** we had much better luck with an individual of this species perched nearby in an isolated tree on the pine savanna at Crooked Tree. First heard singing at a moderate distance, the bird eventually moved to the roadside, where it gave splendid views and offered abundant photographic opportunity for many minutes. As those of us who endured the long search for this species at the King Ranch in Texas will recall, this is a difficult bird to see in the US, but it is much more common and more reliably observed in its huge range south of the US.

## Trogons—Trogonidae

**Slaty-tailed Trogon, *Trogon massena*:** heard repeatedly at Chan Chich, and eventually seen well by, I believe, all of us. This is Belize's largest trogon, easily identified by the solid dark tail and screamingly red underparts with no white border. John Gould named this dramatically beautiful bird for F. V. Masséna, the prince of Essling and duke of Rivoli; Masséna's household also lent their names to the Rivoli and the Anna's Hummingbird, that latter named for Masséna's wife.

**Black-headed Trogon, *Trogon melanocephalus*:** we found this to be the commonest trogon at, almost constantly heard at Chan Chich and well seen a number of times, there and at Altun Ha. This and the yellow-bellied "violaceous" trogons can be difficult to keep straight; a simple mnemonic is that both sexes of the **BL**ack-headed have a **BL**ue eye ring, the **G**artered a **GL**ow Golden one (lighter in females).



**Gartered Trogon, *Trogon caligatus*:** this attractive, rather small trogon was heard and seen a few times at Chan Chich, including a fine male perched above the swimming pool on our last morning together. Three taxa long thought to make up a single species, the Violaceous Trogon, are now recognized as distinct: the Guianan Trogon, the Amazonian Trogon, and the Gartered, the only one of the three found in Mexico and Central America. The Gartered Trogon's range also extends into northern South America.

**Collared Trogon, *Trogon collaris*:** seen a few times at Chan Chich, this smallish red-bellied or orange-bellied trogon is easily distinguished from the much larger Slaty-tailed by its light yellow bill and the white band separating the brightly colored belly from the green or brown breast and head. The tail pattern, belly color, and song vary geographically in these birds, and many authorities now recognize two species; taking that view, Belize is home to the Northern Collared Trogon, *Trogon puella*.

### **Motmots—Momotidae**

**Tody Motmot, *Hylomanes momotula*:** this smallest and cutest of the motmots was heard, and by a fortunate few actually seen, along the River Trail just below the main plaza of Chan Chich. Vocal as it is, this is a maddeningly difficult bird to see, perching low and motionless in the dense, dark forest understory. Unlike other motmots, this species lacks tail rackets, but its big

head and heavy bill, along with the pale pastels of its plumage, are sure signs of its belonging to the family.

**Lesson's Motmot, *Momotus lessonii*:** heard a few times and seen by some of us at Chan Chich.

Like the Tody and other motmots, this bird tends to sit quietly on a woodland perch waiting for a hapless insect, reptile, or bird to wander past. The Lesson's perches higher, though, making it on average easier to view than the Tody Motmot. It was long "lumped" with four (!) other trogon species under the English name Blue-crowned Motmot; the four are distinguished by minor plumage characters and notable differences in their song. Many birders got an instant lifebird or two when these five species were finally split.

### **Kingfishers—Alcedinidae**

**Ringed Kingfisher, *Megaceryle torquata*:** common at Crooked Tree and Ladyville, perched on wires and trees or hovering ponderously over the water. The male habitually hunting from a pole outside our breakfast room window at Bird's Eye View quickly became a familiar sight. This is a very large kingfisher, the heaviest individuals weighing nearly as much as a kookaburra.

**Belted Kingfisher, *Megaceryle alcyon*:** one seen on the Rio Bravo at Chan Chich by a few. This is the only migrant kingfisher in Belize, where it commonly winters from August to April.

**Green Kingfisher, *Chloroceryle americana*:** we had only a few sightings of this common and widespread tropical kingfisher, including excellent views of two (probably a pair) on the river at the end of the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich. Unlike the Belted, males of this species are more colorful below than females, which lack the rufous breast band of the male.

### **Puffbirds—Bucconidae**

**White-whiskered Puffbird, *Malacoptila panamensis*:** only two species of this truly tropical family occur in Belize. We had good experiences with this one, an improbably shaped bird of the forest undergrowth. One was heard and glimpsed by some at the Chan Chich coffee plantation, and one of our vehicles enjoyed excellent views of one perched, uncharacteristically in the relative open, near the Chan Chich entrance as we set out for our afternoon drive around Gallon Jug. The photographers among us were able to capture even the funny tufts of white bristles at the base of the bill.

### **Jacamars—Galbulidae**

**Rufous-tailed Jacamar, *Galbula ruficauda*:** brilliantly colored and nearly hyperactive in their pursuit of large insects, these jacamars gave us all good views at Chan Chich, with a pair nesting in the slope of a buried Maya structure above a small pond. "Jacamar" is the Tupi-Guarani name for these bee-eater lookalikes; "galbula" is a Latin name of uncertain historical application, first applied to the jacamars by the German ornithologist Paul Möhring in 1752.

## Toucans—Ramphastidae

**Northern Emerald Toucanet, *Aulacorhynchus prasinus*:** heard by some on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich. This widely distributed omnivore is split by some authorities into as many as eight species.

**Collared Aracari, *Pteroglossus torquatus*:** seen only a couple of times, at Altun Ha and at Chan Chich, but these implausible little toucans gave outstanding views each time. At Altun Ha, we were greeted by a pair inspecting what was obviously an inchoate nest hole. The odd genus name, “feather tongue,” recalls that early European ornithologists believed that toucans had a feather in their mouth rather than a tongue; in fact, the tongue is long, narrow, and fringed, featherlike but still a tongue.

**Keel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos sulfuratus*:** the national bird of Belize, and one of the most charismatic and captivating anywhere. The froglike croaking was a frequent sound at Chan Chich, and at least seven individuals put on a dazzling show at the coffee plantation there on our afternoon visit, flying across the road with their unlikely bills drooping and perching high on bare limbs as they prepared to roost. As always, our encounters with these spectacular birds were among the clear and unforgettable highlights of the trip.

## Woodpeckers—Picidae

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus varius*:** one seen at Chan Chich Lodge. This is the most migratory of American woodpeckers, regularly wintering as far south as Panama.

**Acorn Woodpecker, *Melanerpes formicivorus*:** common and conspicuous on the pine savanna near Bird’s Eye View at Crooked Tree, a habitat striking those of us familiar with the bird in the US as unusual. The subspecies resident in Belize is *M. f. albeolus*, notable for its white underparts without noticeable yellow on the throat or extensive streaking on the flanks. The birds we saw were busily collecting acorns and stuffing them in the hole-riddled trunks of the pines.

**Black-cheeked Woodpecker, *Melanerpes pucherani*:** common and noisy at Chan Chich, in the forest and around the lodge clearing. We had excellent looks at many of these conspicuous birds, including good views of the colorful belly patch.

**Yucatan Woodpecker, *Melanerpes pygmaeus*:** much harder to find than I had expected. Good views were afforded by a single bird in the campground at Bird’s Eye View, where a male perched close to a few of us for careful study. In addition to the yellow tufts at the base of the bill—red in the local Golden-fronted Woodpeckers—the small size and, especially, short bill were apparent. Unfortunately, this bird was seen just as our group was arriving from the airport, and only a few of us were able to enjoy it.



**Golden-fronted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes aurifrons*:** common and vocally conspicuous, especially in scattered trees in open, disturbed habitats at Bird's Eye View. The head pattern of this Middle American species varies considerably from north to south, with Belizean birds showing a red nape (and in males, a red crown) and red tufts at the base of the bill. The northern subspecies *M. a. aurifrons*, more familiar to most of us from its occurrence in Oklahoma and Texas, has yellow on the nape, belly, and nasal tufts.

**Smoky-brown Woodpecker, *Dryobates fumigatus*:** a single female seen by one of our groups in the forest behind Chan Chich Lodge, clinging quietly to a trunk while we watched a Slaty-tailed Trogon. An attempt to draw the demure little woodpecker closer using brief playback had no effect at all on the woodpecker, but the trogon and its mate, which we had been watching and photographing for several minutes, immediately flew in to perch above our heads.

**Pale-billed Woodpecker, *Campephilus guatemalensis*:** the largest of Belize's woodpeckers, and high on the list of the largest picids in the world. We saw this species several times at Chan Chich, both in the forest and on the grounds of the lodge; its distinctive double rap, a rhythmic peculiarity shared with the closely related Ivory-billed Woodpecker, was a frequent sound there. The entirely or largely red head, of males and females respectively, makes this bird all the more spectacular. On the cultural and emotional force of the large woodpeckers, see [academia.edu/61415323/Taking\\_It\\_Personal\\_Where\\_the\\_Ivory\\_bill\\_Survives](https://academia.edu/61415323/Taking_It_Personal_Where_the_Ivory_bill_Survives).

**Lineated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus lineatus*:** frequently seen at both Crooked Tree and Chan Chich, in straight, rapid flight or feeding in large trees. In addition to the head pattern, the broadly spaced white stripes on the back are quite different from the neat, narrow V on the back of the less common Pale-billed.

### **Falcons—Falconidae**

**Laughing Falcon, *Herpetotheres cachinnans*:** one of the most startling experiences of our entire trip came as we stood on the road just outside the gates of Bird's Eye View, when an adult Laughing Falcon flew in to a nearby low tree and stared at us, apparently unperturbed by our presence, for many minutes; the more typical view is of a bird perched in a lone tree in the middle of a vast pasture half a mile away. The loud honking laughter of this bird is a familiar sound of the tropical morning, but the individual we saw remained silent.



**American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*:** a female atop a large dead stump at Gallon Jug. Kestrels are uncommon wintering birds in Belize, present from October to the end of the season.

**Merlin, *Falco columbarius*:** three or four seen, the best a perched bird on the pine savanna of Crooked Tree. Merlins are exclusively winter visitors this far south. In the US and southern Canada, numbers of this once quite uncommon little falcon are rapidly increasing, and in some areas pairs now nest in urban situations, a novel circumstance for this dashing bird.

**Bat Falcon, *Falco ruficularis*:** a single bird, certainly the same one each time, was seen each morning at Bird's Eye View, perched high in a distant dead tree; others were seen from time to time, including a closer perched bird on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon. As the English name suggests, these somewhat crepuscular birds regularly capture and eat bats, but they also prey on insects and the occasional bird.

### **New World Parrots, Psittacidae**

**White-crowned Parrot, *Pionus senilis*:** half a dozen at the coffee plantation at Chan Chich, all of them in flight. The unflattering scientific name refers to the bird's chubby figure and to the irregular white patches on crown and upper breast. More useful when these smallish parrots fly over is the absence of red patches on the wing.

**Red-lored Parrot, *Amazona autumnalis*:** far and away the most common parrot of our trip, seen and incessantly heard almost everywhere. The nominate subspecies is especially handsome, with a yellow patch beneath the soft blue crown and glaringly red forehead. Most were seen in flight, but we had many close views of perched birds, and we were shown an occupied nest below the lodge at Chan Chich. It is unclear what this tropical resident has to do with autumn.

**Yellow-headed Parrot, *Amazona oratrix*:** wonderful and repeated views of several birds along the entrance road to Bird's Eye View. The species name *oratrix*, "the speaker," reflects an aptitude that has made the Yellow-headed Parrot one of the most desired species in the cagebird trade, and the species has long been plagued by illegal hunting and persecution by farmers. This species is now badly endangered, entirely absent from what has been estimated at nearly 80% of its original native range. In Belize, the small population is said to be relatively stable, but the birds' movements make them difficult to observe: only when they move into tall cashew trees in late winter, as the nuts begin to form, can they be reliably found.



**White-fronted Parrot, *Amazona albifrons*:** fairly common around Crooked Tree, and we eventually saw a respectable total, mostly birds in flight. Even by parrot standards, this is a remarkably colorful bird. Unlike many of its congeners, the species has not been significantly affected by the cagebird trade, and the same agricultural activity that has put larger parrots in competition with human farmers may have resulted in increased habitat for this denizen of open or lightly wooded areas.

**Mealy Parrot, *Amazona farinosa*:** this big, heavy, and inevitably loud parrot was seen several times around Bird's Eye View and at Chan Chich. We had good views of perched birds, letting us note the rather bland face with a big white eye ring and, at times, even the delicate blue color of the nape—a color aptly identified in the species account in the Cornell Lab's *Birds of the World* (birdsoftheworld.org) as “floury glaucous.”

**Olive-throated Parakeet, *Eupsittula nana*:** this common parrot, with its pointed tail and drab underparts, is a familiar sight and sound overhead in much of eastern Central America. It is much less frequently seen well perched, and we were very fortunate to have several fine views of this bird taking nectar from the snowy flowers of the small tree we were told was called madre de cacao. Some taxonomic authorities split the mainland populations of this bird as the Aztec Parakeet, *Eupsittula astec*, restricting the name Olive-throated, *E. nana*, to Jamaican parakeets.



## **Antbirds**

**Barred Antshrike, *Thamnophilus doliatus*:** heard and seen on the Limpkin Trail at Bird's Eye View, and most dramatically on the road from Chan Chich as we began our afternoon drive around Gallon Jug: a calling bird finally emerged from the forest edge, then flew out to show off in the tops of the trees on the roadside. This bird is one of the many cases in which the male and the female were originally described as separate species, only later being recognized as the two sexes of a sexually dimorphic species.

**Plain Antvireo, *Microrhophias quixensis*:** one seen at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Dot-winged Antwren, *Microrhophias quixensis*:** heard and reasonably well seen at both Bird's Eye View and at Chan Chich, usually in loose association with other forest birds. The natty black and white male is overshadowed by the stunning cinnamon-bellied female, one of the most attractive members of a family that includes a great many dull birds.

**Dusky Antbird, *Cercomacroides tyrannina*:** seen on a couple of occasions at Chan Chich. This is decidedly one of those great many dull birds found among the members of the family Thamnophilidae.

## Ovenbirds—Furnariidae

**Olivaceous Woodcreeper, *Sittasomus griseicapillus*:** the most frequently seen of the woodcreepers at Chan Chich, encountered at one time or another by most of us and often seen quite well as it quietly crept up the tree trunks. Increasingly, taxonomists treat the Middle American populations of this bird as a species distinct from those found in South America; the Belizean woodcreeper would thus become the Grayish Woodcreeper, *S. griseus*.

**Northern Barred Woodcreeper, *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*:** a dramatic and large forest woodcreeper, seen by some of us at Chan Chich. The classification and naming of this bird continues to unravel: formerly considered conspecific with the Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper of northern South America, this species as currently understood may in fact comprise two further species, the Western Northern Barred Woodcreeper, *D. sanctithomae*, and predictably but regrettably, the Eastern Northern Barred Woodcreeper, *D. punctipectus*. Only the Western Northern Barred Woodcreeper occurs in Belize, while the Eastern Northern Barred Woodcreeper is found only to the south, in Colombia and Venezuela. Got it?

**Strong-billed Woodcreeper, *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*:** a real highlight for those of us fortunate enough to see them were two Strong-billed Woodcreepers at the Norman's Temple Trail of Chan Chich, where we had excellent prolonged views of a bird more often heard than seen and more often glimpsed than enjoyed. More than two dozen subspecies have been described, and some authorities suggest that the complex may comprise two or three "cryptic" species, a term that nowhere finds better application than among the woodcreepers.

**Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, *Xiphoryhynchus flavigaster*:** repeatedly seen at Chan Chich, often very well. The lower mandible strikes most observers as pink rather than ivory, but this medium-sized forest bird is relatively easy to identify in any event—for a woodcreeper. This species occurs as far north as northern Sonora and Chihuahua in Mexico, making it a not impossible vagrant to the sky islands of New Mexico or Arizona.

**Rufous-breasted Spinetail, *Synallaxis erythrothorax*:** a pair of this handsome furnariid was discovered by André on the Limpkin Trail at Bird's Eye View; the pair was building a nest out of large, coarse sticks and twigs, first constructing a large platform on which the globular nest will presumably be placed.

## Manakins

**Red-capped Manakin, *Ceratopipra mentalis*:** spectacular views of a male and a female on the forest edge of the coffee plantation at Chan Chich; some groups went on to see the species again on the forest trails there. We were not so fortunate this time as to enjoy a performance of the males "moonwalking" on the lek; the Macaulay Library holds many videos of what is one of the most charming displays of any American bird. See [birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/recman1/cur/multimedia?media=video](http://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/species/recman1/cur/multimedia?media=video).

## Tityras

**Masked Tityra, *Tityra semifasciata*:** small numbers at Chan Chich, mostly high in the trees and at a distance, though on our first morning there, one pair fed low in a fruiting tree at one of the staff housing areas.

**Northern Schiffornis, *Schiffornis veraepacis*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Cinnamon Becard, *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*:** on our last full day at Chan Chich, two of these delightful small becards fed and called in flowering trees around the central plaza.

**Rose-throated Becard, *Pachyramphus aglaiae*:** a few here and there, with the best views on the entrance road to Bird's Eye View, where a pair of these normally reclusive birds fluttered and perched on the fence and small roadside trees within literal arm's reach. Males in the areas we visited were perceptibly darker than the dove-gray males breeding in southeastern Arizona, but they still show considerable pink on the throat, a trait absent in most males from southern Central America. On Aglaé Brelay, this species' eponym, see [birdaz.com/blog/2015/12/15/the-deserving-aglae](http://birdaz.com/blog/2015/12/15/the-deserving-aglae).

## Royal Flycatchers, Oxyruncidae

**Tropical Royal Flycatcher, *Onychorhynchus coronatus*:** heard by some on the trails at Chan Chich. Five taxa of this widespread tropical beauty are split at the species level by some authorities, making the Belizean bird the Northern Royal Flycatcher, *Onychorhynchus mexicanus*.

**Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, *Terrenotricus erythrurus*:** a fine show by one of these very small and very attractive flycatchers at Chan Chich.

## Tyrant Flycatchers

**Stub-tailed Spadebill, *Platyrrinchus cancrinus*:** one on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich.

**Sepia-capped Flycatcher, *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, *Myiionectes oleagineus*:** seen by some on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich. This attractive woodland flycatcher consumes more fruit than most other members of the family.

**Northern Bentbill, *Oncostoma cinereigulare*:** the weird, loud, and distinctive buzzing call was heard on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich. This oddly charming little flycatcher is sometimes considered conspecific with the Southern Bentbill, *O. olivaceum*.

**Common Tody Flycatcher, *Todirostrum cinereum*:** seen, and frequently heard, in forests and on woodland edge at Bird's Eye View and Chan Chich. The white eyes, natty black head, and nervously cheerful habits make this one of the most endearing birds of the Americas. The name "tody flycatcher" refers to the bird's very long bill, a character that led Linnaeus to describe it originally as a species of *Todus* today.

**Yellow-olive Flatbill, *Tolmomyias sulphureus*:** one at Chan Chich near the back plaza. All members of the genus *Tolmomyias*, formerly known simply as "flycatchers," are now called "flatbill" in English.

**Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet, *Ornithion semiflavum*:** a very attractive little flycatcher, heard a few times at Chan Chich and seen well by most of us at the coffee plantation there. The strong face pattern, with darker crown and cheek separated by a broad white supercilium, is vaguely reminiscent of the bold head plumages evolved independently by various larger flycatchers.

**Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma imberbe*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Greenish Elaenia, *Myiopagis viridicata*:** seen on three dates, once on the Limpkin Trail at Crooked Tree and on two consecutive days at Chan Chich.

**Yellow-bellied Elaenia, *Elaenia flavogaster*:** good views of this mild-mannered, wild-coiffed flycatcher at Bird's Eye View and at Gallon Jug, where one perched in a small roadside tree for leisurely looks through the scopes. This widespread species has often been classified as conspecific with the Large Elaenia, *E. spectabilis*. The genus name, carried over without alteration into English, where it poses a perennial spelling challenge, is adapted from a Greek word meaning "olive-colored."

**Northern Tropical Pewee, *Contopus bogotensis*:** a constant presence at Chan Chich, usually perched high on a dead twig and giving its sharp descending call. The Tumbes and Southern Tropical Pewees were formerly "lumped" with this species as simply the Tropical Pewee.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, *Empidonax flaviventris*:** nice views of one behind the dining room at Chan Chich.

**Least Flycatcher, *Empidonax minimus*:** one or two at Bird's Eye View and at least one at Chan Chich. Like the Yellow-bellied, these birds will breed in the northern US and Canada.

**Vermilion Flycatcher, *Pyrocephalus rubinus*:** common and delightfully distracting at Crooked Tree, with a few spotted around Gallon Jug. This little bird has an enormous range, stretching from the southwestern US to Argentina.

**Bright-rumped Attila, *Attila spadiceus*:** heard and seen by a few of us at Chan Chich. This crazy-looking flycatcher with the dangerous-looking bill is indeed named for the Hunnish king; Charles Bonaparte subsequently named a group of flycatcher-like African birds *Bleda*, for Attila's little brother.

**Rufous Mourner, *Rhytipterna holerythra*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Dusky-capped Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tuberculifer*:** heard and occasionally seen at both Bird's Eye View and Chan Chich. Those of us familiar with this species in the US readily noted how much darker and more contrasting the bird's crown is in Belize; in other areas of its broad Central and South American range, the cap is truly dusky or even blackish.

**Brown-crested Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tyrannulus*:** this big, powerful flycatcher was detected several times on the Limpkin Trail at Bird's Eye View and near the lodge at Chan Chich. Though this species' range is nearly as large as that of the much smaller Dusky-capped, the Brown-crested shows only minor plumage variation from the US to Argentina.

**Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*:** the adjective describes both the bird's size and its personality. Kiskadees, noisy and flashy, were abundant around Crooked Tree, and we encountered smaller numbers at Chan Chich and Gallon Jug. The English name is echoic of the nasal call, the genus name from a Tupí name said to mean "grumbler."

**Boat-billed Flycatcher, *Megarynchus pituanga*:** two or three seen at Chan Chich. This is the largest of a group of similarly plumaged flycatchers that are not intimately related evolutionarily, but are spread instead over half a dozen different genera. The species name *pituanga* has the same source as the genus name of the Great Kiskadee.

**Social Flycatcher, *Myiozetetes similis*:** very common and very conspicuous at Crooked Tree and at Chan Chich. This species ranges north to northern Mexico, and has recently made appearances in southernmost Texas. This species is named for its tendency to appear in loosely organized, garrulous parties. One at Bird's Eye View stubbornly, and no doubt frustratingly, directed its social instincts to the mirrors of the cars parked on the road.



**Piratic Flycatcher, *Legatus leucophaeus*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*:** very common throughout, especially in the open habitats of Crooked Tree and Gallon Jug, but present and conspicuous in good numbers even on the forest edges of Chan Chich. It has been suggested that there may in fact be three species involved, one in eastern Central and northern South America, one in western Mexico, and one in South America; the Belizean bird would represent the Middle American Kingbird, *T. satrapa*. This is of considerable interest to birders in the US as well, as such a split would mean that the “tropical” kingbirds of Texas and those of Arizona belong to two different species, the Middle American Kingbird in the former and the West Mexican in the latter.

**Couch’s Kingbird, *Tyrannus couchii*:** heard a number of times at Chan Chich. Though originally described as a distinct species in 1858, the Couch’s was lumped with the look-alike Tropical soon thereafter; not until the 1960s were the vocal differences between the two demonstrated, and a formal description of the morphological features distinguishing them—bill size and wing formula—was finally published in 1979 (see [sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v096n02/p0221-p0233.pdf](http://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v096n02/p0221-p0233.pdf)).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus forficatus*:** one at Bird’s Eye View.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus savana*:** not abundant, but a few seen near the airport and Ladyville and then at Bird's Eye View, including on our Northern Lagoon boat trip. This species is present year-round in Belize, but it seems likely that those residents are joined at least occasionally by migrants from South America in the northern summer.

### Vireos—Vireonidae

**Rufous-browed Peppershrike, *Cyclarhis gujanensis*:** heard at Beck's B&B, on the pine savanna of Crooked Tree.

**Green Shrike Vireo, *Vireolanius pulchellus*:** heard by a couple of our groups at Bird's Eye View, and seen by Ian and others, a rare event in the life of a leaf-green bird that spends that life high among green leaves.

**Lesser Greenlet, *Pachysylvia decurtatus*:** this tiny, neatly plumaged vireo is, like so many of the family, far more often heard than seen; this species has a simple, pleasing song, a single phrase repeated without variation over and over. We were fortunate enough to have good looks several times, letting us appreciate the greenish upperparts, whitish underparts, and bluish crown. Among the best views were those given by a pair fairly low and fairly close in small trees in one of the Chan Chich staff housing areas.

**White-eyed Vireo, *Vireo griseus*:** to judge by the number of singing and calling birds we heard each day, this is a common species in forest and disturbed areas in Crooked Tree and around Chan Chich. The cheerful "pick-up-the-beer-check" song and the rasping and whining calls were a nearly constant part of the soundscape in both areas, and with a little patience it was possible to get very good views of what is sometimes a slightly skulking bird on its breeding grounds in the eastern US. This species has enjoyed a great number of English names since it was first seen by Europeans; for one humorous example, see [birdaz.com/blog/2013/06/16/the-politician](http://birdaz.com/blog/2013/06/16/the-politician).

**Mangrove Vireo, *Vireo pallens*:** several were heard in the course of our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, but this rather dull, chunky vireo is often hard to see, and I do not know whether any of our group had satisfying views in the end.

### Jays—Corvidae

**Brown Jay, *Psilorhinus morio*:** this enormous and vociferous jay was present in small numbers around Bird's Eye View, but it really came into its own at Gallon Jug. A dozen or so greeted us on our arrival at the airstrip, and they were omnipresent on our afternoon drive there. In contrast, the birds at Crooked Tree were slightly more elusive, sitting quiet in the treetops until we turned to leave, their sign to let loose with their loud, squealing whistles. At any season, Brown Jays are likely to be encountered in flocks, which appear to be composed of a breeding pair and a number of "nest helpers," immature birds that assist the adults. Farther north in the range of the nominate subspecies, both white-tipped and brown-tipped birds occur, distinguished by the pattern of the broad, lavish tail; in Belize, only white-tipped birds are found.

**Yucatan Jay, *Cyanocorax yucatanicus*:** this regional endemic was one of the species we most hoped to see on our visit to the pine savanna surrounding Crooked Tree. We looked in vain for

considerable time, but then Barry and our local guides heard two distant flocks. Soon enough, one of the groups appeared at moderate distance, and then we were surrounded. The birds were too active to keep an accurate tally, but by the time we left them, we had certainly seen 30 and perhaps as many as 50 individuals. In spite of its restricted range, this is, as our experience reflected, a common bird, and apparently increasing in Mexico and Belize. Like many jays, the Yucatan is known to breed socially, and so many of the birds we saw were likely “nest helpers” in association with the actual breeding pair. Most individuals were adults, but we saw a few yellow-billed immature birds, too. For many of us, our time with these beautiful corvids was high on our list of memorable moments in Belize.



### **Swallows—Hirundinidae**

**Tree Swallow, *Tachycineta bicolor*:** a few seen on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, but less common than I had expected. It seems likely that we were just too late to see large numbers of this very early migrant, which often arrives on the breeding grounds in the US and Canada in the first days of March.

**Mangrove Swallow, *Tachycineta albilinea*:** very common in open country and over the water at Bird's Eye View. This small but handsome swallow, with its distinctive face pattern and large white rump patch make even the brown immatures easy to identify; the blue-green and white adults are breathtaking, and readily admired as they perch low over the water or on wires.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*:** a few at Bird's Eye View. The few seen well appeared to be wintering birds from the north, but the Ridgway's Rough-winged Swallow, often treated as a distinct species, *S. ridgwayi*, breeds throughout the southern half of Belize; it is most easily identified by the blackish undertail coverts, which can often be seen in close views. The "roughness" of the primaries in birds of both taxa consists of tiny serrations on the leading edge of the feather, a characteristic with no known function.

**Purple Martin, *Progne subis*:** as many as seven at a time at Bird's Eye View; all identified were adult males, but it is easy to overlook females among the similar and much more abundant Gray-breasted Martins. Like the Tree Swallow, this species arrives early on its breeding grounds, and the earliest spring birds can be seen in the US in late January. Purple Martins winter in Amazonia.

**Gray-breasted Martin, *Progne chalybea*:** abundant everywhere around Crooked Tree and at Gallon Jug, with a few birds seen flying over Chan Chich itself. At Bird's Eye View and at the Gallon Jug airstrip, pairs were entering possible nesting sites in drainpipes and under eaves.

**Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*:** heard on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, and four or five seen passing over Gallon Jug as we prepared to board the plane back to Belize City.

### **Gnatcatchers—Poliptilidae**

**Long-billed Gnatwren, *Ramphocaenus melanurus*:** very few heard and seen at Chan Chich. It is entirely uncertain just how many species of gnatwrens there are in Central and South America, and classifications have changed repeatedly over the past two centuries.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, *Poliptila caerulea*:** several around Bird's Eye view, where the species is a common resident of pine savanna and other open woodlands; local birds are certainly joined in the winter by migrants from farther north.

**White-browed Gnatcatcher, *Poliptila bilineata*:** excellent views at the coffee plantation at Chan Chich. Though not as vexed as that of the Long-billed Gnatwrens, the taxonomic history of this species is complex, and it has been "lumped" into a single species with a various combination of other Central American gnatcatchers.

### **Wrens—Troglodytidae**

**Scaly-breasted Wren, *Microcerculus marginatus*:** one sound-recorded at Chan Chich Lodge.

**House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*:** common throughout, the spirited song a continuous thread running through the sonic texture of the tropics. The House Wrens in Belize belong to the subspecies *intermedius*, and are often classified together with a number of other tropical taxa as a distinct species, the Southern House Wren, *T. musculus*. Many of our group noted that the birds here sang a perceptibly different song from that of the familiar birds of the US and Canada.

**Carolina Wren, *Thryothorus ludovicianus*:** one at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Spot-breasted Wren, *Pheugopedius maculipectus*:** common throughout, though as usual, heard more often than seen. The adult is very smartly marked, with a streaked face and spotted underparts, but the species' fondness for dark viny tangles often makes it hard to fully appreciate. Most of us eventually had very good views of at least one; they seemed especially cooperative on the Limpkin Trail at Bird's Eye View.

**White-bellied Wren, *Uropsila leucogastra*:** a plain but elegant wren, apparently not common, or at least not at all conspicuous. Good views were ultimately had by most of our group on the forest trails of Chan Chich.

**White-breasted Wood Wren, *Henicorhina leucosticta*:** small numbers were heard around Chan Chich, and at least one of our smaller groups had brief views of one on the forest trails there. This is a bird well worth looking at, with its attractive plumage and comically stubby tail.

### **Mimic Thrushes—Mimidae**

**Gray Catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*:** wintering birds easily found at both Crooked Tree and Chan Chich.

**Tropical Mockingbird, *Mimus gilvus*:** common and vocally more than conspicuous in open habitats throughout. The species as currently composed may be paraphyletic, with the birds of northern Central America and Mexico more closely related to the Northern Mockingbird than to other "Tropical" Mockingbirds; if so, the conclusion must be that they are a distinct species from more southerly populations. The species would be known as the Maya Mockingbird, *Mimus gracilis* (note that some authorities call it the Mayan Mockingbird, but that adjectival form is traditionally reserved for the language of the Maya).



### **Thrushes—Turdidae**

**Wood Thrush, *Hylocichla mustelina*:** seen by at least some of us at Bird's Eye View, especially on the Limpkin Trail.

**Clay-colored Thrush, *Turdus grayi*:** very common throughout, its yowling call heard from pastures and forest edges alike.

### **Finches—Fringillidae**

**Yellow-throated Euphonia, *Euphonia hirundinacea*:** heard and by some seen around Chan Chich.

**Olive-backed Euphonia, *Euphonia gouldi*:** small numbers seen on the forest trails around Chan Chich and occasionally in the trees of the main plaza. Though more subtly colored than some other euphonias and chlorophonias, this is a very attractive little bird.

### **Yellow-breasted Chat, Icteriidae**

**Yellow-breasted Chat, *Icteria virens*:** a wintering bird seen by some of us on a pasture at Crooked Tree. The taxonomic placement of this species remains puzzling, but it is currently assigned to its own family, the carefully spelled Icteriidae. See [birdaz.com/blog/2014/07/11/who-made-that-bird-a-warbler-anyhow](http://birdaz.com/blog/2014/07/11/who-made-that-bird-a-warbler-anyhow).

## **Icterids—Icteridae**

**Eastern Meadowlark, *Sturnella magna*:** common on the grassy fields of Gallon Jug, where we met with several pairs in glorious song, including during our wait on the plane back to Belize City. The subspecies found in Belize is the smallish, dark *S. m. mexicanus*.

**Black-cowled Oriole, *Icterus prothemelas*:** frequently seen at both Bird's Eye View and Chan Chich, this boldly patterned yellow and black oriole ranks high on the list of Belize's most beautiful birds. This handsome oriole was once "lumped" into a single species with four other yellow orioles: the Bahama Oriole, the Cuban Oriole, the Hispaniolan Oriole, and the Puerto Rican Oriole.

**Orchard Oriole, *Icterus spurius*:** common at Crooked Tree and Chan Chich, often seen feeding in flowering trees. The untangling of the various plumages shown by this beautiful little oriole is accounted one of Alexander Wilson's accomplishments; before him, abundant confusion had reigned about the number and appearance of oriole species in eastern North America.

**Hooded Oriole, *Icterus cucullatus*:** orange beyond orange, Hooded Orioles gave us repeated fine views at Bird's Eye View, often posing for long minutes in a small tree right at the edge of the water. Belize is near the southern edge of this small oriole's range; males of the subspecies resident here, *igneus*, are the brightest orange of Hooded Orioles, other populations varying from yellowish to dull orange.

**Baltimore Oriole, *Icterus galbula*:** common at Crooked Tree and at Chan Chich, though obviously less abundant as a winterer here than the Orchard Oriole. For a period beginning in 1973, this species and the more westerly Bullock's Oriole were considered conspecific, a view reversed by the American Ornithologists' Union in 1995. The relation between the two "revived" species in the area of sympatry on the Great Plains has been the subject of important studies conducted by Cornell scientists—for a look into some of the results, see [news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/08/baltimore-bullocks-orioles-will-retain-separate-identities](https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/08/baltimore-bullocks-orioles-will-retain-separate-identities). Note, as a matter of curiosity, that the species name of this oriole is identical to the genus name of some jacamars, in each case alluding to a "yellow bird" known to the Romans but of uncertain identity.

**Red-winged Blackbird, *Aegelaius phoeniceus*:** a few seen at Bird's Eye View and on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon, where this species nears its southern limit as a breeder. As only fitting for a bird that often nests and usually travels in groups, the genus name is from a Greek word meaning "gregarious"; the subspecies found in Belize is named for Charles Richmond, the American ornithologist and bibliographer, a hero to all.

**Bronzed Cowbird, *Molothrus aeneus*:** a flock of a couple of score flew over us on our afternoon drive at Gallon Jug but declined to alight where we could watch them more closely.

**Melodious Blackbird, *Dives dives*:** obviously named by someone who had never heard the bird sing, this sturdy, medium-large blackbird with the monotonous song was common in open habitats around Chan Chich and at Crooked Tree. The tautonym *Dives dives* means “splendid bird, splendid bird,” an exaggerated enthusiasm to my mind.

**Great-tailed Grackle, *Quiscalus mexicanus*:** abundant around Crooked Tree and other open habitats such as Gallon Jug, but seen only a couple of times, as high flyovers, at Chan Chich. In Belize, this incredibly successful and incredibly charismatic blackbird is absent only from the mountainous regions of the southwest.

### New World Warblers—Parulidae

**Ovenbird, *Seiurus aurocapilla*:** seen on the Limpkin Trail at Bird’s Eye View.

**Northern Waterthrush, *Parkesia noveboracensis*:** apparently one of the more common winter warblers, seen every day at virtually all of the sites we visited, the only exceptions open pastures and agricultural fields.

**Louisiana Waterthrush, *Parkesia motacilla*:** less common than the Northern Waterthrush, but still frequently seen, particularly at Chan Chich, where on a couple of occasions we had both species in view at the same time. In addition to all of the dazzling tropical species, this trip gave us all ample opportunity to strengthen our confidence in waterthrush identification, letting us compare the very different chip notes and subtly distinctive plumages of each species.

**Black-and-white Warbler, *Mniotilta varia*:** another apparently fairly common wintering species, seen at most sites in small numbers.

**Prothonotary Warbler, *Protonotaria citrea*:** seen by some on our boat trip on the Northern Lagoon. The odd name probably refers to the office of a functionary in French Louisiana, and certainly not to any member of the papal curia; see [birdaz.com/blog/2013/03/07/the-prothonotary-warbler-you-sure-about-that](http://birdaz.com/blog/2013/03/07/the-prothonotary-warbler-you-sure-about-that).

**Kentucky Warbler, *Geothlypis formosa*:** apparently common and delightfully easy to see, even feeding in the open on the lawns at Chan Chich with waterthrushes and Morelet’s Seedeaters.

**Common Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas*:** this abundant breeder across most of northern North America seemed oddly uncommon on our trip, seen only a couple of times; it is possible that most had departed for the nesting areas, or, more likely, that we wisely spent too little time tramping through soggy, chigger-ridden fields in search of this pudgy warbler.

**Hooded Warbler, *Setophaga citrina*:** gratifyingly common and easily watched, especially at and around Chan Chich.

**American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*:** common in the forests, where we found birds of all age and sex classes feeding high or low in the tangles and leaves; the constant flirting and flaring of the colorful tail apparently serves both as communication and a foraging strategy, meant to flush potential prey from concealment in the dense foliage.

**Northern Parula, *Setophaga americana*:** seen only a couple of times, at Crooked Tree.

**Magnolia Warbler, *Setophaga magnolia*:** probably the commonest of New World warblers at all the sites we visited. This species' pre-alternate molt takes place on the wintering grounds, so that the adults are at their dazzling brightest as they move north to breed in the boreal forests.

**Yellow Warbler, *Setophaga petechia*:** scattered individuals throughout, all plain-headed birds from the north; the red-headed Mangrove Warbler is restricted in Belize to the immediate coast and cayes. The two are often treated as separate species, the northern bird then known as the American Yellow Warbler, *S. aestiva*.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Setophaga pensylvanica*:** seen only once, at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Palm Warbler, *Setophaga palmarum*:** spectacular prolonged views of two or three birds calmly feeding just outside the dining room at Bird's Eye View. This species regularly makes "top ten worst bird names" lists, but on the wintering grounds in Florida, the West Indies, and the Caribbean coasts, the name makes perfect sense; see [birdaz.com/blog/2015/10/05/being-stupid-being-wrong](http://birdaz.com/blog/2015/10/05/being-stupid-being-wrong).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler, *Setophaga coronata*:** very small numbers of birds of the eastern- and northern-breeding Myrtle group at Bird's Eye View and at Gallon Jug. Our finding that the birds here were all dull individuals fits well with the fact that male Myrtle Warblers typically move north in the spring earlier than females.

**Yellow-throated Warbler, *Setophaga dominica*:** common, especially in palms, at Crooked Tree and at Chan Chich; the dining room at Bird's Eye View is named for this species, and few were the meals there that we did not share with at least one Yellow-throated Warbler hopping under or on the tables. All of the birds we saw well showed yellow at the front of the eyeline, a character sometimes used to distinguish an eastern from a western subspecies, but most authorities now treat this bird as monotypic.

**Grace's Warbler, *Setophaga graciae*:** heard once or twice on the pine savanna near Crooked Tree, but never seen. The Central American breeding populations of this species are decidedly disjunct, probably as a result of its almost exclusive preference for nesting and feeding in pines.

**Townsend's Warbler, *Setophaga townsendi*:** one photographed by Carl from the porch of his room at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Black-throated Green Warbler, *Setophaga virens*:** we found a few single birds at Chan Chich, particularly on the Loggers Trail there.

**Golden-crowned Warbler, *Basileuterus culicivorus*:** seen twice at Chan Chich Lodge.

## Cardinal Grosbeaks—Cardinalidae

**Rose-throated Tanager, *Piranga roseogularis*:** this prettily pastel Yucatan endemic was seen twice at Chan Chich.

**Summer Tanager, *Piranga rubra*:** common and easily seen at Crooked Tree and Chan Chich alike; often first detected by its distinctive stuttering call.

**Red-crowned Ant Tanager, *Habia rubia*:** a few seen on the trails at Chan Chich.

**Red-throated Ant Tanager, *Habia fuscicauda*:** apparently the commoner of the ant tanagers at Chan Chich, where singles and pairs were seen several times on the forest trails.

**Black-faced Grosbeak, *Caryothraustes poliogaster*:** single birds seen twice on the trails at Chan Chich.

**Blue-black Grosbeak, *Cyanoloxia cyanooides*:** one of the first songs heard each morning at Chan Chich was the pleasant melodious whistle of a male Blue-black Grosbeak whose territory unmistakably included the clearing and dining areas. He was occasionally joined by a female behind one of the rooms, where the pair was doubtless nesting or preparing to do so. This big-billed bird is usually found in dark forest tangles, where much of the time it proves impossible to see well; our Chan Chich birds, however, were easily watched as they moved about in the open.

**Blue Bunting, *Cyanocompsa parellina*:** one seen at Chan Chich Lodge.

**Indigo Bunting, *Passerina cyanea*:** common in open areas and yards at Crooked Tree, where we found small flocks feeding on the ground. The pre-alternate molt in adults begins in February, and several times we saw males wearing a predominantly blue plumage.

**Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris*:** a male seen by some at Crooked Tree.

## Tanagers—Thraupidae

**Black-throated Shrike Tanager, *Lanio aurantius*:** this dramatic forest tanager, often forming the core of mixed-species feeding flocks, was heard and seen on the Loggers Trail at Chan Chich.

**Blue-gray Tanager, *Thraupis episcopus*:** several seen around Crooked Tree and lesser numbers at Chan Chich. It has been suggested that the plain-winged birds of Middle and northernmost South America are a different species from the white-shouldered populations elsewhere in South America; that split would make the Belizean bird the Northern Blue-gray Tanager, *T. cana*.

**Yellow-winged Tanager, *Thraupis abbas*:** subtly beautiful and easily watched, this regional specialty was seen every day at Chan Chich and on the trails; one pair was busily building a nest in the palms above one of the rooms. The scientific names of this, the Blue-gray, and a number of other *Thraupis* tanagers appear to be part of an elaborate nomenclatural joke; see [birdaz.com/blog/2015/07/18/ecclesiastical-tanagers](http://birdaz.com/blog/2015/07/18/ecclesiastical-tanagers).

**Golden-hooded Tanager, *Stilpnia larvata*:** small numbers of this classic tropical beauty were seen each day at Chan Chich.

**Red-legged Honeycreeper, *Cyanerpes cyaneus*:** common at Chan Chich, these brilliantly plumed little tanagers were reliably found feeding in flowering trees and eyeing the hummingbird feeders.

**Blue-black Grassquit, *Volatinia jacarina*:** single males seen at Crooked Tree and at Chan Chich. This handsome little finch-like bird is the famous “johnny jump-up,” known for the male’s acrobatic displays; unfortunately, we did not witness the performance on this trip.

**Morelet’s Seedeater, *Sporophila moreletii*:** recently resplit out of the old White-collared Seedeater complex (and retaining the unfortunately authoritative misspelling in the species epithet), this almost inconceivably tiny tanager, the males smartly clad in black and white and the females an attractive buffy brown, was common in both of the areas we visited, but particularly easy to find at Crooked Tree, where the birds fed, oblivious to our presence, on the lawns at Bird’s Eye View. The pleasant tinkling song was quickly learned and always enjoyed.



**Black-headed Saltator, *Saltator atriceps*:** common and noisy at Chan Chich; this is a large arboreal tanager, usually observed in small flocks. While this species is often secretive, hiding in the dense vegetation, we were fortunate enough to have repeated opportunities for good views at,

for example, one of the staff housing areas or the main plaza of Chan Chich Lodge. The Latin word “saltator” has the same meaning as the Tupí “tangara” (source of the English word “tanager”), namely, “dancer,” apparently bestowed on these birds for the ease with which they maneuver in dark thickets.

**Cinnamon-bellied Saltator, *Saltator grandis*:** a loudly singing bird perched high in the treetops at Bird’s Eye View eventually flew to join another, our only observation of this bright-throated saltator. Other than the throat patch and a strong white supercilium, this is a fairly dull bird by tanager standards, a circumstance reflected in the old name Grayish Saltator, under which this species and South America’s Olive-gray and Bluish-gray Saltators were long included as a single species. The Cinnamon-bellied has recently advanced northward in Sonora, Mexico, and has been reported, though not yet cogently documented, in Arizona.

### **Mammals**

**Mexican Black Howler Monkey, *Alouatta pigra*:** heard and seen well several times.

**Central American Spider Monkey, *Ateles geoffroyi*:** heard and seen well several times.

**Yucatan Squirrel, *Sciurus yucatanensis*:** close views at Bird’s Eye View Lodge.

**Ocelot, *Leopardus pardalis*:** two on our night drive around Gallon Jug.

**Gray Fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*:** one seen by some at Gallon Jug.

**White-tailed Deer, *Odocoileus virginianus*:** very common around Gallon Jug, obviously accounting for the healthy and presumably happy populations of Jaguars and Mountain Lions regularly seen there.

### **Selected Reptiles**

**Morelet’s Crocodile, *Crocodylus moreletti*** (yet another creative spelling of the poor man’s name)

**White-lipped Mud Turtle, *Kinosternon leucostomum***

**Common House Gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus***

**Green Iguana, *Iguana iguana***

**Brown Basilisk, *Basilsicus vittatus***

**Small-spotted Cat-eyed Snake, *Leptodeira polysticta***



## Virtual Bird Walks

### 2020

July	1	Local Birding
August	2	Backyards and a Marsh
September	3	Backyards and Trips
October	4	Member Birding
November	5	Member Birding
December	6	Member Birding

### 2021

January	7	International Birding and New York City
February	8	International Birding
March	9	Member Birding
April	10	Shore Birds
May	11	Local Birding
June	12	Member Birding
July	13	Birding Costa Rica
August	14	Identify a Bird by Its Eyes
September	15	Birds and Water
October	16	Birds with Masks
November	17	Winter Birds

### 2022

January	18	Personal Choice
February	19	Color
March	20	Signs of Spring
April	21	Birds Eating or Black & White Birds
May	22	Local Birds
September	23	My Summer
November	24	Bird Pairs
December	25	A Trip

## 2023

January	26	Winter
February	27	A Month in a Birder's Life
March	28	Egrets, Herons, and Wading Birds
April	29	Woodpeckers
May	30	Small Birds
June		Members Meeting, no Virtual Bird Walk
September	31	What I Did on My Summer Vacation
October	32	Black & Orange

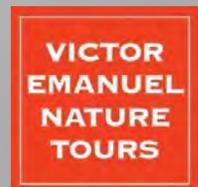
## 2024

January	33	Cold
February	34	Water
March	35	Beyond the Bird
April	36	Pick a Place

## Upcoming VENT Tours

[VentBird.com](http://VentBird.com)

<b>Colorado</b>	A Summer Stay in Estes Park	June 17–23, 2024; June 15–21, 2025
<b>Colorado</b>	Northeast Colorado	June 23–26, 2024; June 21–24, 2025
<b>Spain</b>	Birds and Art in Asturias	August 28 – September 6, 2024
<b>Texas</b>	South Texas in Style	January 16–19, 2025
<b>Nebraska</b>	Sandhill Cranes and Prairie Chickens	March 17–24, 2025
<b>Alabama</b>	The Gulf Coast and Dauphin Island	April 14–20, 2025
<b>France</b>	Birds and Art in Provence	May 1–9, 2025
<b>Scotland</b>	Scotland in Style	May 10–19, 2025
<b>Germany</b>	Birds and Art in Berlin and Brandenburg	September 19–28, 2025
<b>France</b>	Brittany in Fall	October 1–9, 2025



## Montclair Bird Club Meeting History

### 2020

May	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
June	A Walk on Pipeline Road, by Sandy Sorkin.
July	The Real James Bond, by Jim Wright.
August	An Online Quiz, with Rick Wright.
September	Manakins and Microbes, by Jennifer Houtz.
October	Bizarre Breeding Behaviors of Tropical Cuckoos, by Christine Riehl.
November	Dispersal in Young Peregrine Falcons, by Elise Morton.
December	An MBC Story Slam, by Pamela Olsen.

### 2021

January	Modern-Day Exploration in the Tropics, by Dan Lane.
February	Winter Raptors, by Giselle Smisko.
March	Damselflies and Dragonflies: The Other White Meat, by George Nixon.
April	Wolf Natural History and Tourism in Yellowstone, by Paul Brown.
May	Sandhills and Saw-whets, by Matthew Schuler.
June	Magnificent Namibia, by Linda Woodbury.
September	Raptors, by Wayne Greenstone.
October	Watershed, by Hazel England.
November	Build-a-Bird, with Rick Wright.

### 2022

January	A Tale of Many Penguins, by Ardith Bondi.
February	Oh! Canada, by Chris Sturm.
March	Tracking the Migration of New Jersey Birds Using the Motus Network, by Cailin O'Connor.
April	Spotlighting Voices in Bird Conservation, by Mardi Dickinson.
May	101 Great Birds from Around the World, by Mark Garland.
June	Members Meeting.
September	Exploring the Big Bend in Southwest Texas, by Donna Traylor.
October	Build-a-Bird II, with Rick Wright.
November	On Safari: Botswana and South Africa, by Ric Cohn.

February Winter Raptors, by Giselle Smisko.  
 March Damselflies and Dragonflies: The Other White Meat, by George Nixon.  
 April Wolf Natural History and Tourism in Yellowstone, by Paul Brown.  
 May Sandhills and Saw-whets, by Matthew Schuler.  
 June Magnificent Namibia, by Linda Woodbury.  
 September Raptors, by Wayne Greenstone.  
 October Watershed, by Hazel England.  
 November Build-a-Bird, with Rick Wright.

## 2023

January America's Iconic Birdman: Frank Chapman, by James Huffstodt.  
 February A Bird Club in San Diego, by Rick Wright.  
 March The Peregrine Project, by Wayne Quinto Greenstone.  
 April Piping Plovers on the Rockaway Peninsula, by Chris Allieri.  
 May Basic Ornithology, by Phil Echo.  
 June Members Meeting.  
 September Build-a-Bird III, with Rick Wright.  
 October Finding W. H. Hudson, The Writer Who Came to Britain to Save the  
 Birds, by Conor Mark Jameson  
 November Attracting Screech Owls, by Jim Wright  
 November Birding and Conservation in Italy, by Marcos Valtriani

## 2024

January Panama, by Rick Wright  
 February The Spectacular Staging of the Whimbrel on the Texas Coast,  
 by Sam Wolfe – [YouTube](#)  
 March Looking for the Goshawk: The Lost Raptor, by Conor Jameson

## In This Issue

Page 1: Long-tailed ducks, by Sandy Sorkin (SS)  
 Page 2: Marsh wren (SS)  
 Page 4: Dark-eyed junco  
 Page 5: Sharp-shinned hawk (SS)  
 Page 8: Red-winged blackbird  
 Page 10: Yellow-rumped warbler (Myrtle) (SS)  
 Page 11: Greater scaup (SS), long-tailed duck (SS)  
 Page 12: Savannah sparrow (Ipswich) SS, ruddy turnstone (SS)

## 2023–2024 Officers and Executive Board

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### From the Editor's Desk

Please feel free to email any items you would like included in future issues of *The Broadwing*. Please include pictures and any other news that will entertain or educate our members.

Sandy

**[MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com](mailto:MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com)**



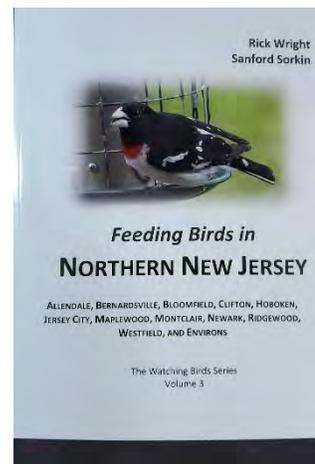
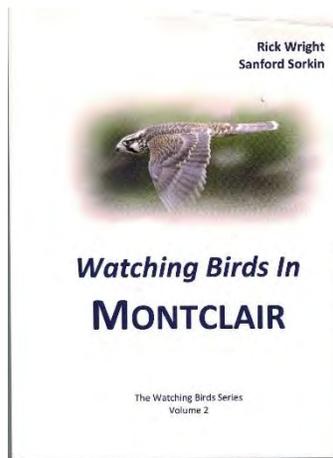
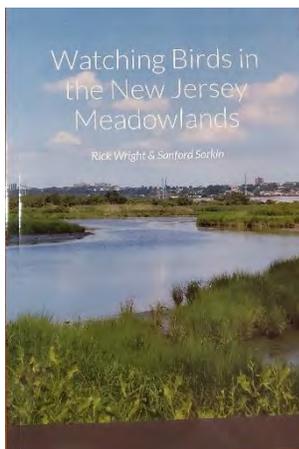
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# The MBC Bulletin Bird

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**THE BROADWING**

The *Broadwing* is published ten times a year. We vacation during July and August.

Send photos, field notes, or articles to Sandy at [MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com](mailto:MontclairBirdClub100@gmail.com).

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