



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Belize: Tropical Birding, Short and Sweet 2017**

Apr 1, 2017 to Apr 8, 2017

Megan Edwards Crewe (with Eduardo & Manuel at Lamanai)

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)*



*A little female White-whiskered Puffbird greeted us as we arrived at the Rio Frio Cave. Photo by participant Tracey Bauder.*

The small country of Belize, perched as it is on the end of the Yucatan Peninsula, offers a great place to "dip one's toes" into the vast sea of Neotropical birding. And our short tour, which combines a few days at the Lamanai Outpost Lodge, in the steamy lowlands along the New Lagoon, with a few days on the Mountain Pine Ridge at the Hidden Valley Inn, gets us right into the thick of things.

We started our adventure around the ancient ruins of Lamanai, a Mayan settlement first established more than 3000 years ago. Among the handful of reconstructed temples, the surrounding forest, the nearby village of Indian Church with its gardens and scruffy fields, and the watery expanse of the lagoon and its many tributaries, we had plenty of places to explore, and plenty of things to look at. Barred Antshrikes and Spot-breasted Wrens flitted through roadside bushes and Blue-black Grassquits demonstrated their jumping prowess, while White-fronted Parrots, Collared Aracaris and Black-cowled Orioles shared flowering trees with wintering warblers and orioles. Black-headed, Gartered and Slaty-tailed trogons gobbled fruits, a gaudy male Red-capped Manakin danced through a nearby bush, a tiny Tody Motmot lurked among the shadows and a mixed flock of warblers, flycatchers and more swarmed around us near the old British sugar mill.

A Black-faced Antthrush strutted across a clearing, followed by an Ovenbird, a pair of Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers hammered challenges on a resonant branch (soon followed by a pair of Pale-billed Woodpeckers), and a Rufous-tailed Jacamar flashed, jewel-like, above our heads near one of the Lamanai temples. On watery outings, we spotted such treats as a mighty Jabiru standing atop its huge stick nest, a handsome Agami Heron stepping carefully along a quiet stream, a wary gang of massively-beaked Boat-billed Herons rustling through trees over our heads, many kingfishers (ranging in size from the tiny American Pygmy- to the massive Ringed) throwing themselves into the water after prey, a trio of Black Catbirds, and a Laughing Falcon resting on a dead snag. A walk in a palm savanna added an inquisitive pair of Gray-crowned Yellowthroats, lustily singing Olive and Botteri's sparrows, a foraging Yucatan Woodpecker, a pair of Olive-throated Parakeets, and a nice comparison between Couch's and Tropical kingbirds, while a van trip through Mennonite country netted us up-close views of a Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, a pair of Aplomado Falcons dive-bombing a handsome White-tailed Hawk, a perched pair of Great Black-Hawks, and close encounters with Fork-tailed Flycatchers.

A short charter flight brought us from the steamy lowlands to the slightly higher -- and definitely drier -- Mountain Pine Ridge. Here, ferns and scattered pines dominated, the latter sadly reduced by a one-two punch of pine bark beetles and repeated wildfires. Despite the loss of trees, there was still plenty to see though. A pair of Plain Chachalacas eyed us from the edge of the hotel lawn. Rusty Sparrows flitted among the ferns and sang from dead pine branches. A Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl peered from a nest hole right over our cabins. Mobs of Red-legged Honeycreepers swirled through fruiting bushes. Giant King Vultures floated overhead and settled into trees over King Vulture Falls. And a pair of Orange-breasted Falcons made a couple of reach-out-and-touch-them rocketing flybys to cap off our late afternoon visit.

We also took made a couple of day trips further afield -- one to the relatively close Rio Frio Caves road, and the other to the more distant ruins of the former Mayan city of Caracol, and both added still more birds to our lists. A Barred Forest-Falcon peered down from a branch over our heads, calling repeatedly. Two tail-swinging Lesson's Motmots shifted through shadowy understory trees. A White-whiskered Puffbird moved quietly from branch to branch, watching for prey. White-bellied Wrens and Tropical Gnatcatchers danced through nearby trees. A Rufous Mourner posed, whistling his appropriately mournful song. A colorful Ocellated Turkey high-stepped it across the road. A noisy mob of Black-faced Grosbeaks swarmed through branches over the road. Flocks of Swallow-tailed Kites -- and a lone White Hawk -- circled overhead. A tiny female Canivet's Emerald sipped nectar roadside flowers. A Bat Falcon perched high in a dead tree near the Caracol parking lot, occasionally shouting challenges into the bright morning air.

And, of course, the still-impressive ruins of Lamanai and Caracol themselves (whose history we learned a bit about, thanks to museum exhibits and our guides) provided an interesting backdrop against which to see the birds. Thanks to the Eduardo, Manuel and Domingo, for their guiding, driving and boat-handling skills, and to the staffs of our lodges for their help in making things comfortable (and tasty!). But most of all, thanks to all of you for joining in the fun! I hope to travel with you again some day soon, on another adventure...

-- Megan

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## KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Tinamidae (Tinamous)

**LITTLE TINAMOU** (*Crypturellus soui*) -- We heard the quavering whistles of one from the forest beyond the parking lot, while getting ourselves organized for our walk at Caracol. [\*]

**SLATY-BREASTED TINAMOU** (*Crypturellus boucardi*) -- And we heard the slow, clear whistles of this one right near the road at one of the places we stopped en route to Caracol -- but just a little too far away to actually see it. [\*]

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) -- Two flew up Dawson Creek ahead of our boat as we headed for the Lamanai savanna for our early morning walk there. The all-black underwing and bold white wing stripe on the upperwing are distinctive.

**MUSCOVY DUCK** (*Cairina moschata*) -- One flew past as Tracey and I made our way to the lodge with the second transfer. True wild birds are all dark with white only on the wing; white anywhere else indicates partial domestic parentage!

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) -- A few in flight over the New Lagoon, but our best views came on our drive through the Mennonite community, when we found a half dozen (all males but one) preening along the edge of a muddy little farm pond. [b]

### Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**PLAIN CHACHALACA** (*Oreortyx pictus*) -- Our best looks came on the grounds of Hidden Valley Inn, where we found a cooperative pair just beyond the pool. We heard their rollicking calls as we gathered, and found the birds themselves shortly afterwards. We had brief looks at another flying across the road in Indian Church one morning.

**CRESTED GUAN** (*Penelope purpurascens*) -- One preening in a tree over one of the cottages at Hidden Valley was a surprise on our last morning's pre-breakfast outing. It scampered up the branch into the leaves when it first saw us, making it a bit of a challenge to get a look at, but later moved back out into the open.

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**OCCELLATED TURKEY** (*Meleagris ocellata*) -- One strolled across the road in front of our van as we drove to Caracol, pausing briefly on the roadside before scuttling off into the forest and away. This species has a pretty limited world range: southeastern Mexico (the Yucatan Peninsula), the Peten region of Guatemala, and Belize.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) -- One sank below the surface of Crab-eater Lagoon as we pulled away from Lamanai's boat dock late one afternoon, seen only by a few -- and then the brightness of the sun bouncing off the water made it impossible to look very hard for it! [b]

### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**JABIRU** (*Jabiru mycteria*) -- One of these massive, human-sized storks (okay, a small human, but still...) stood on its enormous stick nest in a tree at the north end of the New Lagoon, with one fluffy, panting chick visible at its feet. [N]

**WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*) -- Tracey and I spotted a couple soaring against some gorgeous piled-up clouds as we cruised towards Lamanai Outpost Lodge; the rest of the group caught up with two as they circled above the boat during our sunset cruise.

### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) -- Very common on the New Lagoon, with dozens festooning the old boat dock at the Lamanai ruins, and a raft of 20-30 floating in a tight-knit group just offshore as we motored to the ruins one day.

### Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) -- Small numbers along the New River, the New Lagoon and its various tributaries, with another soaring high over the ruins at Lamanai.

### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) -- One stood in the spotlight beam at the edge of the New Lagoon during our "Spotlight Safari", alternately gazing at the reeds below it and keeping a wary eye on us.

**BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON** (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) -- One panting in a shady copse over a little stream in Mennonite country gave us great views of the thin "tiger stripes" on its thick neck. We saw a couple of others in flight over Dawson Creek on our way to and from the savanna.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) -- Small numbers hunted along the fringes of the New Lagoon. [b]

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Daily around the New Lagoon and its tributaries, with others in the fields and farm ponds in the Mennonite community.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Small numbers along the fringes of the New Lagoon, including one seen in nice comparison with the previous species on our sundowner cruise.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – A couple of adults flew past as we birded along Crab-eater Lagoon, and at least one all-white youngster foraged along the edge near a much-larger Great Egret as we motored out of Dawson Creek after our visit to the savanna. [b]

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – A youngster stood among the reeds at the edge of Crab-eater Lagoon, seen on our "Sunset Cruise, and we saw an adult lurking beyond a couple of egrets the following morning on our way to the savanna. [b]

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Most common in the Mennonite community, where they lingered around the feet of livestock in the fields, but we also saw scattered birds along the New River and the New Lagoon. Most were already sporting traces of their breeding plumage, which colors them a bit like toasted marshmallows.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Another regular sight around Lamanai, typically in flight. We did get nice looks at one hunting along the edge of Irish Creek on our morning outing there.

**AGAMI HERON** (*Agamia agami*) – Our first was a dingy youngster -- notable for that huge, long, dagger-like beak -- foraging along the edge of Dawson Creek as we headed in for our savanna trip. Fortunately for those who missed that one, we had another youngster -- and several gorgeous adults -- along Irish Creek on our last morning at Lamanai.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – An adult flew along just over the trees as dusk approached, seen towards the end of our "Sunset Cruise".

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Tracey and I spotted an adult and a youngster tucked into a tree along the New River on our journey down from Carmelita with the second transfer. [b]

**BOAT-BILLED HERON** (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – Our best views came along the New River with the first transfer from Carmelita, when we found a couple of wary birds at a day roost. Fortunately for Tracey (who came on the second transfer), we found another handful of birds along Irish Creek -- though they proved even tougher to see than the first ones.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**WHITE IBIS** (*Eudocimus albus*) – A number of small skeins flew over us while we birded on the New Lagoon and Dawson Creek, flashing their snowy-white (black-tipped) wings against the blue, blue skies.

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Daily, often in good numbers. This species is smaller and shorter-tailed than the next species, and shows circular pale patches towards the wingtips on its underwings.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Abundant throughout, including dozens rocking back and forth over Lamanai Outpost Lodge each day.

**LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE** (*Cathartes burrovianus*) – Tracey got some nice shots of one flying over her Lamanai cabin on a couple of days, and the rest of the group caught up with a bird standing on a roadside bund in the Mennonite rice fields, showing its eponymous head to perfection.

**KING VULTURE** (*Sarcorampus papa*) – An adult soared high above the Jaguar Temple at Lamanai one morning, but our best views came at Hidden Valley's King Vulture Falls, where we spotted at least eight perched in trees around the waterfall. These big vultures have a 6-foot wingspan!

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One sat on a dead snag along the New Lagoon, seen as we motored towards Irish Creek. When we slowed down for a look, it flew off, carrying its fish. [b]

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**GRAY-HEADED KITE** (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – One glided right over our heads as we started our first pre-breakfast walk at Lamanai. The combination of pale gray body and broad, rounded wings with black-and-white striped underwings is distinctive.

**SWALLOW-TAILED KITE** (*Elanoides forficatus*) – A group of at least six circled gracefully in the skies over the Douglas D Silva forestry camp, seen as we made our way to Caracol, and we saw a handful of others over the Rio Frio Cave road on our visit there.

**BLACK-COLLARED HAWK** (*Busarellus nigricollis*) – Tracey and I spotted a couple -- one flying, one perched -- along the New River on the first afternoon's second transfer.

**SNAIL KITE** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) – Many seen well around the New Lagoon, with particularly great looks at a male in a spindly little tree near the mouth of Dawson Creek and at a female on a branch right over the river on our "Spotlight Safari". How about those ruby red eyes?! We even saw a few carrying snails, which they make short work of, thanks to that wickedly hooked beak.

**PLUMBEOUS KITE** (*Ictinia plumbea*) – Our first glided over at Caracol, its rusty wing panels gleaming against the blue sky. We saw another overhead along the Rio Frio Cave road, and a couple of birds perched near Thousand Foot Falls. This species breeds in Belize, but retreats further south in the nonbreeding season.

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) – One soared high above the hot fields of the Mennonite community, sharing airspace with White-tailed Hawks and Aplomado Falcons -- though I think Eduardo was more excited about this species! [b]

**GREAT BLACK HAWK** (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) – Two flew across the road in front of our vehicle, and landed in a tree right in front of somebody's house in Mennonite country. Through the scopes, most of us could see the black-and-white striped thighs that help to distinguish this species (when perched) from Common Black-Hawk.

**ROADSIDE HAWK** (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – Our first were a pair gathering nesting material, seen at the start of a morning's walk in Indian Church. We saw others on our drive through the Mennonite community, and still more at Caracol. [N]

**WHITE-TAILED HAWK** (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) – Two in the skies over the Mennonite community attracted our attention -- and the attention of some passing Aplomado Falcons! One of the birds dropped down to a big stick nest in a dying tree, where at least one fluffy youngster appeared to be holding court. [N]

**WHITE HAWK (SNOWY)** (*Pseudastur albicollis ghiesbreghtii*) – One circled in the sky above the Guacamayo River, seen from the far end of the bridge -- great spotting, Siegfried! The subspecies ghiesbreghtii is white all over, except for a narrow black tail band, and some black speckles on the wings.

**GRAY HAWK** (*Buteo plagiatus*) – An adult perched high in a leafless tree near the Douglas Da Silva forestry camp, seen on our drive to Caracol. We spotted a streaky youngster the next day along the Rio Frio Cave road.



**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – Kevin spotted one over the Lamanai Outpost Lodge during our first full day's break, and the rest of the gang caught up with others over Dawson Creek and the Mennonite community -- or with the one among a big flock of vultures over Lamanai Outpost Lodge on our last morning there.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – One was a regular in the skies over the Lamanai Outpost Lodge, gliding back and forth at all hours of the day. Its similarity to the nearby Turkey Vultures, both in flight style and plumage details, was striking.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**RUDDY CRAKE** (*Laterallus ruber*) – A chortling pair called from the reeds RIGHT IN FRONT OF US at the mouth of Dawson Creek, but we just couldn't see them. And couldn't entice them out into the open, either! [**\***]

**RUSSET-NAPED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides albiventris*) – Two scuttled around under some trees at the water's edge near the Lamanai ruins boat dock, gathering big mouthfuls of nesting material -- great spotting, Tracey! This species has been split from the former Gray-necked Wood-Rail. [**N**]

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – Tracey and I had a handsome adult poking along the edge of the New River on her transfer in from the airport, and we all saw a rather dingy youngster perched precariously on some reeds along the edge of Dawson Creek.

*Aramidae (Limkin)*

**LIMPKIN** (*Aramus guarauna*) – A dozen or so, sprinkled along the edges of the New Lagoon on various days; we also heard their loud, hoarse calls regularly.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A trio stood at one end of a muddy farm pond in the Mennonite community, looking dapper.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**NORTHERN JACANA** (*Jacana spinosa*) – Abundant along the New River, where we saw dozens tiptoeing across the lily pads, with others (including some stripe-faced youngsters on the New Lagoon and Dawson Creek.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – Two rummaged along the back edge of a muddy puddle on one of the farm ponds in Mennonite country. The crouched posture of this species is a good behavioral clue to its identity. [**b**]

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – One bobbed along the edge of a mucky farm pond, and another waggled along a stream we passed on our drive to Caracol. [**b**]

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*) – One foraged along the back edge of a pond in the Mennonite community. The big pale eye ring of this species -- and its black underwing -- help to separate it from other shorebird species. [**b**]

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – One mingled with the Black-necked Stilts in a shallow, muddy farm pond in Mennonite country. [**b**]

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Surprisingly, a little gang (of very mixed colors) in a farm field in the Mennonite community were the only ones we saw during the tour. [**I**]

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Our best views came along the edge of the New Lagoon on our early morning outing to the Lamanai savanna, when we spotted two perched up beside Dawson Creek. We saw others, a bit more distantly, on our sunset cruise and along Irish Creek.

**RED-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) – A couple perched along the Ultralight trail near the Lamanai Outpost Lodge showed the yellow bills that give this species... Hang on. Hmmm... In actuality, the SCIENTIFIC name of this species (which means "yellow-billed" in Latin) is a much better descriptor than its misleading English name. The only part of the bill that's red is the very base!

**SHORT-BILLED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) – We heard one calling from the forest at Caracol. [**\***]

**PLAIN-BREASTED GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina minuta*) – Our first flashed into a tree along the path in the savanna, but we had even better views of a pair perched along fence wires in the Mennonite community. This species is smaller and duller-colored than the next, lacking the Ruddy Ground-Dove's rusty tones.

**RUDDY GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Particularly nice views of a male trundling around in the road just up the hill from the Lamanai Outpost Lodge on our first pre-breakfast outing there.

**BLUE GROUND-DOVE** (*Claravis pretiosa*) – The steady "boop boop boop" song of this handsome species was a regular part of the Lamanai soundtrack, but we saw the bird only once -- a male singing from the trees near the museum at the ruins.

**WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – We heard the distinctive "blowing across a soda bottle" song of this species on our first walk through Indian Church, but it took until we got to Hidden Valley to actually see the bird. There, we had fine looks at several on the grassy lawn outside the main building.

**GRAY-HEADED DOVE** (*Leptotila plumbeiceps*) – One trundling around in the middle of the entrance road at the Lamanai ruins allowed us to get nice scope views. This species is very similar to the previous one; it has slightly smaller white spots on the corners of its tail, and red, rather than blue, facial skin around its eyes.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**GROOVE-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – A busy gang of them swarmed through bushes near some of the houses in Indian Church, seen on our first pre-breakfast walk, and we saw others snuggling on branches and fence rails, swaggering across grassy lawns, or flapping through pastures around Lamanai.

**SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – One clambered through a fruiting tree in the Lamanai ruins, looking rather like its namesake, thanks to that long, rusty tail.

*Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)*

**BARN OWL** (*Tyto alba*) – One hunting along the ultralight landing strip near the Lamanai Outpost Lodge was a highlight of our night walk there; it certainly looked ghostly white in the spotlight!

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – One peeked out from its nest/roost hole in a dead snag right in the middle of the cabins at Hidden Valley, putting a nice cap on our first afternoon's birding there. Some of us heard it (or another) tooting outside our cabins during the night.

**MOTTLED OWL** (*Ciccaba virgata*) – We heard the deep hoots of this big owl along the ultralight runway during our night walk, and got quick views of the bird itself when it flew past over our heads. Unfortunately, it then landed out of view!

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**COMMON PAURAUQUE** (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – Super views of one perched at eye level in a bush right beside Crab-eater Lagoon on our "Spotlight Safari". That long tail, with its white outer tail feathers, was certainly obvious!

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – Dozens swept back and forth through the skies over Thousand Foot Falls, occasionally coalescing in big, screaming mobs to race down across the face of the falls themselves. They were tough to see against the trees though!

**VAUX'S SWIFT (RICHMOND'S)** (*Chaetura vauxi richmondi*) – We saw several small groups of them in the skies over the New River (on the first transfer), others winnowing over Indian Church during an afternoon's birding around the village, and still more over the lodge at Hidden Valley.

*Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

**STRIPE-THROATED HERMIT** (*Phaethornis striigularis*) – One of these tiny hummingbirds investigated a painting (flowers!) on the porch of the Lamanai Outpost Lodge as we gathered for a walk one morning.

**GREEN-BREASTED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) – A verdant male perched on a twig along Dawson Creek, calmly surveying the surrounding countryside.

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) – One of these winter visitors foraged along the Ultralight Trail behind the Lamanai Outpost Lodge.

**CANIVET'S EMERALD** (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*) – A little female hovered around some tiny, tubular yellow flowers blooming along the Rio Frio Caves road, her tail pumping madly. Her stripey face and bluish tail (with little white corners) helped to identify her.

**AZURE-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia cyanocephala*) – Poor views of a couple of birds jousting over the road behind our cabins at Hidden Valley.

**RUFOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – Certainly the most common of this tour's hummingbirds, with a handful tussling over the Lamanai feeders each day and others encountered out and about in the surrounding habitats.

*Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**SLATY-TAILED TROGON** (*Trogon massena*) – A male in the Lamanai ruins sat with his back to us -- but we could certainly see his beautiful blue-green back, and his bright orange beak every time he turned his head!

**BLACK-HEADED TROGON** (*Trogon melanocephalus*) – A group of three or four flitted around a fruiting fig tree near the base of the stairway up to the Jaguar Temple at Lamanai on our first visit, and we saw others on each of our subsequent visits.

**GARTERED TROGON** (*Trogon caligatus*) – We had males at Lamanai and Caracol, then found a very cooperative female along the Rio Frio Cave road. Males of this species are distinguished from the previous by their yellow (rather than blue) eyerings and finely barred undertails.

**COLLARED TROGON** (*Trogon collaris*) – A perched male along the Rio Frio Caves road was the last of our four trogon species to be found.

*Momotidae (Motmots)*

**TODY MOTMOT** (*Hylomanes momotula*) – One of these little motmots called from the forest near the Jaguar Temple at Lamanai. It took a bit of patience -- and lots of peering into the dense vegetation -- but we finally spotted him, sitting on a branch in the middle of a bush.

**LESSON'S MOTMOT** (*Momotus lessonii exiguus*) – After hearing one hooting from the forest at Lamanai on our last morning's pre-breakfast walk, we caught up with a handsome pair along the road to Caracol. They moved through the trees, swinging their racketed tails and calling repeatedly.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle torquata*) – The most common of the tour's kingfishers, seen every day around Lamanai -- including a noisy pair that made regular territorial passes over the Lamanai Outpost Lodge.

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – We spotted one of these winter visitors along Dawson Creek, right before we made our landing at the savanna. [b]

**GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Reasonably common along the waterways we traveled, with especially nice looks at a couple along Irish Creek. The white outer tail feathers on this species -- and a multitude of white spots on its wings -- help to distinguish it from the larger Amazon Kingfisher.

**AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – Our first was a tiny gem perched along Dawson Creek, and we saw another along Irish Creek on our last morning at Lamanai.

*Bucconidae (Puffbirds)*

**WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD** (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – Super views of one sitting in a nearly leafless Cecropia tree along the Ultralight trail at the Lamanai Outpost Lodge, thanks to some great spotting by Manuel. The rictal bristles at the base of its bill were impressively long!

**WHITE-WHISKERED PUFFBIRD** (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – A female over the picnic tables near Rio Frio Cave was nicely cooperative, sitting for long minutes in the same place, then switching positions so we could see a different angle.

*Galbulidae (Jacamars)*

**RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – A male, identified as such by his snowy white throat, hunted in the clearing near Lamanai's Mask Temple. This species is known as "King Hummingbird" in parts of the Caribbean -- and it's easy to see why!

*Ramphastidae (Toucans)*

**COLLARED ARACARI** (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – We encountered several busy gangs of these small toucans, with particularly nice views of 6 or 7 in a tree right outside the Lamanai dining room as we headed towards the ruins one morning. The "toothy" pattern on their colorful beaks is pretty amazing.

**KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – Gratifyingly common throughout the tour, from our first morning (bouncing through flowering trees at the edge of Indian Church) to our last afternoon (flying like front-heavy lawn darts over the clearings at Caracol). This is Belize's national bird.

### Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – Common on Mountain Pine Ridge, including a busy gang around our lodge and another big group at the Douglas Da Silva forestry camp. Particularly entertaining was the favored storage area of the camp group -- in the very holey siding of the camp's many cabins! Though I doubt the forestry department was as amused...

**BLACK-CHEEKED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes pucherani*) – A noisy bird over the parking lot at Caracol was, surprisingly, the only one we saw on the trip.

**YUCATAN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes pygmaeus*) – One of these little woodpeckers -- a species endemic to the Yucatan peninsula and its nearby islands -- rummaged through a tree near the savanna path, hanging upside down from the branches.

**GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (VELASQUEZ'S)** (*Melanerpes aurifrons dubius*) – Easily the most common of the tour's woodpeckers, seen every day but one -- including a busy pair with a nest in a hole over the museum at Caracol. [N]

**SMOKY-BROWN WOODPECKER** (*Picoides fumigatus*) – One near the Mask Temple, not far from where we found our jacamar -- part of our great woodpecker morning at the ruins.

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes rubiginosus*) – The last of the morning's woodpeckers seen at Lamanai -- a point-blank bird right beside the trail as we headed back to the boat launch. Considering how hard it was to spot the first time we tried to find it (when it called and called and called, but never showed), it was a little surprising how easy it was to find the second time!

**CHESTNUT-COLORED WOODPECKER** (*Celeus castaneus*) – A pair in the Lamanai ruins put on a nice show as they clambered around in the trees overhead; the male did a bit of hammering on a dead snag while the female looked on.

**LINEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – One investigating the white trunk of a small tree along a road in Indian Church gave us nice views. We heard another calling near the lodge at Hidden Valley one afternoon.

**PALE-BILLED WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – A pair along a trail at the Lamanai ruins was part of our woodpecker extravaganza there, seen shortly before the Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers made their appearance. This big species is a close relative of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**BARRED FOREST-FALCON** (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – Wow! This species is often really tough to see (as it can be a real skulker), so to have a calling bird fly in right over our heads along the Rio Frio Caves road was certainly a surprise. We had fantastic views of it in the scope; there's certainly no question as to why it's called "barred"!

**LAUGHING FALCON** (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – Especially nice views of one perched up on a dead snag along the edge of Crab-eater Lagoon, seen as we headed (via boat) to the ruins one morning, with another in Indian Church. This is a snake-eating specialist.

**APLOMADO FALCON** (*Falco femoralis*) – A screaming pair attacked one of the White-tailed Hawks we found in Mennonite country, doing their best to drive it out of the area and giving us great chances to study them in the process. These large falcons are uncommon in Belize, and generally restricted to savanna and other open areas.

**BAT FALCON** (*Falco ruficularis*) – Tracey and Eduardo spotted one briefly at the Lamanai ruins on our second visit there, and the rest of the group caught up with another, perched in a leafless tree near the parking lot at Caracol. This species gets its name from its preferred prey; it's largely crepuscular in its hunting (i.e. does it mostly at dawn and dusk).

**ORANGE-BREASTED FALCON** (*Falco deiroleucus*) – Wow, wow, wow! What a wonderful grand finale to our late day exploration of the falls at Hidden Valley! After Thousand Foot Falls proved to be a bit quiet, we made our way to King Vulture Falls, where a roosting mob of the vultures themselves captured our attention. As we watched and counted, we heard the distinctive cries of this species, and a pair came rocketing past us, right at eye level. While we caught our breath and congratulated ourselves, the pair came back and shot STRAIGHT TOWARDS US, before pulling up right over our heads. They made another close pass before heading off along the cliffs to perch in a leafless tree. Wow!

### Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

**BROWN-HOODED PARROT** (*Pyrilia haematotis*) – Unfortunately, we never got a good look at a perched bird; they were all whizzing past in a flurry of wings, calling as they went.

**WHITE-CROWNED PARROT** (*Pionus senilis*) – Seen around Indian Church on a couple of days.

**RED-LORED PARROT** (*Amazona autumnalis*) – One of the most common parrots on the tour, with many seen well -- including noisy birds nibbling flowers and fruits in trees around Indian Church.

**WHITE-FRONTED PARROT** (*Amazona albifrons*) – The other common parrot on this tour, seen every day but the first -- including plenty gabbling in the trees around Indian Church.

**OLIVE-THROATED PARAKEET (AZTEC)** (*Eupsittula nana astec*) – Our first, silhouetted against an orange sunset along the ultralight runway, were distinguishable by their profile, but we couldn't really see any color. Fortunately, we had super views of others perched up in a treetop in the savanna, glowing in the early morning sunshine.

### Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

**BARRED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – Fabulous views of a calling pair along the road near Lamanai Outpost Lodge -- the male in his stripey pajamas, and the rusty female with her "punk rock" crest and finely barred face.

**DOT-WINGED ANTWREN** (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – A pair of busy birds twitched through the forest along one of the trails at Caracol, scolding constantly.

**DUSKY ANTIBIRD** (*Cercomacroides tyrannina*) – We heard one singing (and singing and singing) along the trail to the sugar mill at Lamanai, but just couldn't entice it out for a view. [\*]

### Formicariidae (Antthrushes)

**BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH (MAYAN)** (*Formicarius analis intermedius*) – One paraded around under some big trees across the track from the Spanish Church at Lamanai, completely unfazed by our presence.

### Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

**OLIVACEOUS WOODCREEPER** (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – Our first was with a mixed flock near the sugar mill at Lamanai, hitching its way up a big trunk. We spotted others at Caracol (right beside us on another tree trunk) and along the Rio Frio Caves road. This little woodcreeper is two-toned: gray on the head and front half of its body, and rufous on the wings, tail and back half.

**IVORY-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*) – One crawled all over a tree near Lamanai's Jaguar Temple, investigating every nook and cranny (and often hanging effortlessly upside down). This woodcreeper is heavily streaked on the head and upper back, with a long pale bill.

**PLAIN XENOPS** (*Xenops minutus*) – One clung, chickadee-like, to an assortment of twigs and vines along a path near the main plaza at Lamanai. Other than the two bright, white stripes on its face, this species is indeed pretty plain.

**BUFF-THROATED FOLIAGE-GLEANER** (*Automolus ochrolaemus*) – We heard one singing repeatedly from the brushy hillsides along the Rio Frio Caves road, but saw it only as a dark shape flashing between bushes -- hardly satisfying enough for a life look! [✱]

#### Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**YELLOW-BELLIED TYRANNULET** (*Ornithion semiflavum*) – A singing bird near the Lamanai ruins museum proved wonderfully confiding, showing his bright yellow belly and bold white eyebrow nicely. We heard others along various trails.

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – One of these tiny flycatchers put on a great show near the restrooms at the Lamanai ruins, sitting for long minutes on the same perch -- virtually unheard of for this species! It allowed us to get some fine scope views; even its pink-based bill was clearly visible.

**GREENISH ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – One with a mixed flock at the Lamanai ruins let us study all sides and angles as it moved from perch to perch along the trail.

**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – A pair patrolled the bushes near where we found our first Gray-crowned Yellowthroats, giving us good looks at their distinctively crested heads.

**NORTHERN BENTBILL** (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) – One flicked along the edge of the trail to Lamanai's sugar mill. Though its greenish-backed, yellow-bellied plumage is similar to that of several other Belizean flycatchers, its distinctively crooked bill -- and its quiet, trilling song -- help to quickly identify it.

**EYE-RINGED FLATBILL** (*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*) – Superb views of one working along the edge of a path through the Lamanai ruins -- particularly when it perched on a dangling dead palm frond. Eventually, everybody had the chance to study it multiple times in the scope. It's certainly aptly named!

**YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHER** (*Tolmomyias sulphureus*) – Fabulous views of one along the Ultralight trail at LOL. Though they're often canopy dwellers, this one was right down at eye level in some tangled branches beside the trail -- giving us great looks at its broad-based beak and pale brown eyes. We heard plenty of others during the tour.

**STUB-TAILED SPADEBILL** (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*) – A few of us heard the soft trills of this species along one of the pathways at the Lamanai ruins, just before the Tody Motmot made its appearance. [✱]

**EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) – One hunted along the edge of one of the plazas at Caracol, returning again and again to the same perch. The long primary extension it showed helps to distinguish this migrant from resident Tropical Pewees. [b]

**LEAST FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax minimus*) – One of these winter visitors flashed out from branches along the road in Indian Church our first morning, part of a loose mixed flock we found near the flowering trees. [b]

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – One hunted from a rock in the middle of the Guacamayo River, seen on our drive to Caracol.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A pair in the savanna showed nicely as they hunted from a variety of perches.

**BRIGHT-RUMPED ATILA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – One along LOL's Ultralight trail was a highlight of our first afternoon's walk there. Once it finally settled down on a perch, it allowed us to get some super looks in the scope. That heavy beak, with its wickedly hooked tip, looked pretty effective!

**RUFOUS MOURNER** (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) – We heard one of these rusty flycatchers calling near the twin Ceiba trees at Caracol -- a mournful, two-note "sigh"-- and whistled it in for a lovely close view.

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Single birds with mixed flocks at several places on the tour, including one hunting in the flowering trees with all the orioles, not far from the Lamanai Outpost Lodge. This was the smaller of the two *Myiarchus* flycatchers we spotted on the trip, and its undertail is completely gray.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – And this was the larger *Myiarchus* we saw; the rusty stripe down the middle of its undertail helps to separate it from the smaller Dusky-capped Flycatcher. It too was seen on several days, including one in the same tree as our first Squirrel Cuckoo at Lamanai.

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Surprisingly, we only heard this normally widespread tropical species once -- near the new house being built at the far corner of Indian Church. It called a few times and then went silent, even when we tried to lure it out with some playback. [✱]

**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – We spotted one in the trees over the Lamanai dining room; it looks very like a Great Kiskadee, but lacks the rufous tones in its wing and tail -- and has a much bigger bill.

**SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – Common throughout -- and appropriately, given their name, usually seen in at least pairs and often larger groups. We spotted one pair busily building a nest not far from the Montezuma Oropendola colony. [N]

**SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – We heard the "squeak toy" call of this species on several days, and got nice looks at one near the road in Indian Church (showing us its streaky yellow belly) and another in the Lamanai ruins (showing its rusty back and tail).

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Abundant throughout, perched up on treetops, fence posts and utility wires virtually everywhere.

**COUCH'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus couchii*) – One at the top of a Caribbean Pine along the edge of the savanna was cooperative, sitting for long minutes in the same spot as he sang. Its "Ka-mere" call is very different from the rapid twittering of the similar-looking Tropical Kingbird.

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – One sat perched atop a small tree we passed on our way to Caracol. This is a winter visitor to Belize.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – A long-tailed male perched atop a tree in the savanna glowed in the early morning sunshine. We had closer views of a shorter-tailed female on a fence wire in Mennonite country, so close we could even see the rosy hint to her underwings with her wings folded.

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) – Quite common in the open country around the Mennonite farms, with nice looks at several perched on barbed wire fences. Males have longer tails than females.

#### Pipridae (Manakins)

**RED-CAPPED MANAKIN** (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) – A handsome male gobbled berries from a fruiting tree along one of the paths in the Lamanai ruins; from our angle, we could even see his yellow thighs. And once we'd had our fill of views, Eduardo entertained us with videos of the wonderful "moonwalk" dance steps it does in its courtship display.

#### Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)



**BLACK-CROWNED TITYRA** (*Tityra inquisitor*) – Our first was a brown-faced female spotted near Lamanai's Mask Temple. We found another pair in the clearing near Caracol's museum, and got nice scope looks as they flitted around in the trees.

**MASKED TITYRA** (*Tityra semifasciata*) – Our first was a streaked brown female in a fruiting fig near the Mask Temple at Lamanai, seen just before we found our jacamar. We spotted a trio near the museum at Caracol, and got one of the males in the scope for another look.

**NORTHERN SCHIFFORNIS** (*Schiffornis veraepacis*) – We heard the distinctive "Hey Ricky!" whistle of this shy forest dweller along the road into Caracol, but couldn't entice the singer out for a look. [∗]

#### Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

**RUFIOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE** (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – We heard one calling from a stand of trees in the savanna. [∗]

**TAWNY-CROWNED GREENLET** (*Tunchiornis ochraceiceps*) – Tracey spotted one as it flitted through the understory along a trail at the Lamanai ruins. The rest of the group only heard its whistled call.

**LESSER GREENLET** (*Pachysylvia decurtata*) – Regular in the forests throughout the tour, though not always easy to see. Our best views came along a trail at Caracol, where one returned again and again to the same part of a tree over the path as it foraged.

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo griseus*) – Very common throughout, with multiples seen (and certainly heard) most days.

**MANGROVE VIREO** (*Vireo pallens*) – We heard far more than we saw, but we finally caught up with a pair over a quiet pool along Irish Creek. They made us work for it though, flitting back and forth through the trees.

**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Very common in the fruiting trees around Hidden Valley Inn on our final pre-breakfast walk, with others (a bit less visible) over the Rio Frio Cave road.

#### Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**BROWN JAY** (*Psilorhynchus morio*) – Very common, with multiple noisy family groups seen most days.

**GREEN JAY** (*Cyanocorax yncas*) – One chortled from a little pine tree near the start of the Coffee Grove trail at Hidden Valley -- nice spotting, Tracey! The subspecies found in Belize (*centralis*) has yellow eyes.

#### Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A few mingled with other swallow species, seen on our way down the New River our first afternoon, but our best looks came near the start of our walk down the Rio Frio Caves road, when we found some quartering low over fields at the Douglas Da Silva forestry headquarters. [b]

**PURPLE MARTIN** (*Progne subis*) – Small numbers on several days around Lamanai, including a handful over Indian Church one morning, and others hunting over the savanna. This is another winter visitor. [b]

**MANGROVE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta albilinea*) – Common along the New River and New Lagoon, with especially nice views of a pair resting on the LOL boat dock one morning, as we waited for the boat shuttle to run us up to the Lamanai ruins.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Little migrant parties winged past over the New River and the New Lagoon each time we were out in the boats, and others swirled over the fields in the Mennonite community.

#### Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN)** (*Troglodytes aedon musculus*) – Our best views came in Indian Church late one afternoon, when we spotted one little songster serenading the neighborhood from the top of a fence post. We heard others around our cabins.

**BAND-BACKED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*) – A busy group of these handsome, social wrens swirled through trees over our heads when we stopped near the twin Ceiba trees at Caracol.

**SPOT-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius maculipectus*) – Super views of a noisy pair near the start of Indian Church one morning, seen as they flitted through some roadside bushes, with others on the grounds of the Lamanai Outpost Lodge for some. We certainly heard them regularly!

**WHITE-BELLIED WREN** (*Uropsila leucogastra*) – One led us on a merry dance up and down the Rio Frio Caves road, but with some patience and a bit of persistence, we all got good looks at it in the end.

#### Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

**LONG-BILLED GNATWREN** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – Two swarmed through some vines along the road into Caracol, singing their trilling little songs. Those long beaks make it look like they're carrying toothpicks!

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – One flicked through a scruffy bush beside the trail in the savanna near Lamanai, its long tail twitching.

**TROPICAL GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila plumbea*) – A pair twitched through trees near the start of the Rio Frio Caves road. This species resembles the previous one, except for their noticeable eyeline and the dark cap of the male.

#### Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – Tracey and I spotted one standing stock-still on a fallen log in the forest near the Caracol picnic shelter during our postprandial stroll.

**CLAY-COLORED THRUSH** (*Turdus grayi*) – The common thrush of the tour, seen on most days. This rather bland, mud-colored species is widespread throughout Central America, and is the national bird of Costa Rica.

#### Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

**BLACK CATBIRD** (*Melanoptila glabrirostris*) – We found several along Dawson Creek, where they lurked among the thickest vegetation. This is another range-restricted species, found only from the Yucatan Peninsula south to northern Guatemala and Belize; there are also two historical records from northern Honduras.

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Singles seen on several days, including a few with mixed flocks near the start of the Lamanai Outpost Lodge's driveway and one meowing from the bushes near our first Gray-crowned Yellowthroats in the savanna.

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus gilvus*) – Two chortled from pine trees in the savanna, looking and acting much like our familiar Northern Mockingbird -- though they lack the distinctive white patches on the wings of their northern cousins.

#### Parulidae (New World Warblers)

**OVENBIRD** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – One strode around under the trees as the Black-faced Antthrush at the Lamanai ruins, looking like its tiny, paler shadow. Some of the group spotted another one closer to the restrooms there. [b]



**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – One stood, tail bobbing, on a big horizontal branch near the Lamanai ruins boat dock on our first visit to the ruins, allowing us to clearly see all of its salient ID features. [b]

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – Among the most common of the tour's warblers, seen creeping up tree trunks and along branches on most days. [b]

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotaria citrea*) – One glowed among a host of Orchard Orioles in a flowering tree at Indian Church. This is another winter visitor to Belize. [b]

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – One flicked through a big flowering tree in Indian Church, seen during an afternoon's walk there. This insect eater steals a lot of nectar during its time on the wintering grounds, using its sharp beak to poke a hole through the base of flowers to get at the nectar without pollinating the plant. [b]

**GRAY-CROWNED YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis poliocephala*) – Fabulous views of a territorial pair singing from a treetop in the savanna, with another right beside our van on our drive to Caracol. Males of this species lack the black mask of most yellowthroats; it's limited to the lores.

**HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) – Tracey spotted a handsome male in some scrub at the edge of Lamanai's Mask Temple -- and got some rather lovely photos of him in the process! [b]

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Another regular on our daily checklist. Our first black and orange male, seen shortly after we started our first pre-breakfast walk towards Indian Church, drew particular attention. [b]

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER** (*Setophaga magnolia*) – These lovely little birds were probably the most common of the tour's warblers, seen every day but one. [b]

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Small numbers around Lamanai Outpost Lodge and Indian Church, including a bright male that foraged in the smaller trees near the hammock shelter on a couple of afternoons.

**CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – We saw a couple of these winter visitors on our last few days -- a rather scruffy one at Caracol, and a cracking male in a fruiting tree right near our cabins at Hidden Valley on the last morning. [b]

**YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Setophaga dominica*) – One flashed its bright throat nicely as it foraged in tall, flowering trees near the start of the Lamanai Outpost Lodge driveway. [b]

**BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) – One along Lamanai's Ultralight trail briefly interrupted our search for Bright-rumped Attila as it dazzled the west coasters. [b]

**RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – Two in a stretch of pine savanna just before the Douglas D Silva forestry camp gave us lovely views on the morning we birded along the Rio Frio Cave road. The subspecies found in Belize is 'salvini'; it lacks the all yellow belly of the widespread Central American "Chestnut-capped" subspecies.

#### *Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)*

**BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – Surprisingly, we saw only a single pair this trip -- spotted as they foraged together in a flowering tree in Indian Church one afternoon.

**YELLOW-WINGED TANAGER** (*Thraupis abbas*) – Nice studies of several nibbling figs in a big Strangler Fig on the grounds of the Lamanai ruins. These lavender-colored tanagers are named for possibly the least-notable thing about them -- a small yellow square on their black wings!

**RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – Common throughout, and sometimes abundant -- like the gang of 20 or more we found swirling through the fruiting trees behind our cabins at Hidden Valley on the last pre-breakfast walk of the tour. The color of the males is just mind-bendingly glorious.

**BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Regular in the scrubby areas around Indian Church and Mennonite country. A male doing his little song jumps from a branch near the lodge was particularly entertaining -- and demonstrated nicely how they got the folk name "Johnny Jump Up"!

**WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (WHITE-COLLARED)** (*Sporophila torqueola moreletii*) – Particularly common around Lamanai, with especially nice looks at a few chasing each other around near the museum in the Lamanai ruins.

**BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – Tracey got a nice picture of one at Caracol, while exploring one of the temples.

**YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris olivaceus*) – One rummaged for seeds with a White-collared Seedeater right beside the road on our drive to Caracol, but our best views came right on the grounds of Hidden Valley the last morning, when we found a male singing from a low branch along one of the roads.

**BLACK-HEADED SALTATOR** (*Saltator atriceps*) – A few small, noisy groups around Indian Church, including a trio right near the end of the LOL driveway our first morning.

**GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – A pair foraged with a mixed flock near the end of the LOL driveway our first morning. Their bold white eyebrows -- and peachy vents -- are quite noticeable against their plain gray plumage.

#### *Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**BOTTERI'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea botterii*) – A singing bird in the savanna posed nicely right at the top of a tree, giving everybody the chance for repeated leisurely studies of him in the scopes.

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – One in the savanna perched up a few times for a quick look around between song bouts, but mostly it crept through the grasses like a fast little mouse. We got some nice views of its buffy lores and distinctively flat head.

**OLIVE SPARROW** (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – Another species seen (and heard) well in the savanna, though again, it took some patience! Eventually, we found it singing from a shaded branch in one of the bigger trees.

**GREEN-BACKED SPARROW** (*Arremonops chloronotus*) – Two bounced around the edge of the LOL parking lot, seen on our first pre-breakfast walk there. This species is closely related to -- and strongly resembles -- the Olive Sparrow, but is black and gray on the head rather than brown and gray.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – One, looking smart in its breeding plumage, spilled its dry trill into the warm morning as we headed back towards the boat after our savanna walk. [b]

**RUSTY SPARROW** (*Aimophila rufescens*) – Two of these big sparrows sat in a bush just above the ubiquitous ferns near Hidden Valley on the morning we drove to Caracol, but we got even better looks at others perched on dead snags on our final pre-breakfast walk.

#### *Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)*

**HEPATIC TANAGER** (*Piranga flava*) – A pair over the Hidden Valley Inn dining room showed nicely at the start of our first afternoon's birding there.

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – Our first was a bright red male gobbling berries from a fruiting fig in the Lamanai ruins, part of the big mixed flock we found there. We had others -- including a very spotty, scruffy young male -- in Indian Church, and still more along the Rio Frio Caves road.

**RED-THROATED ANT-TANAGER** (*Habia fuscicauda*) – A male low in the bushes along a trail at the Lamanai ruins showed nicely on our our first visit there, and we had great studies of a pair along the Rio Frio Caves road.

**BLACK-FACED GROSBEAK** (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) – A noisy group swarmed along the road to Caracol, the first of several species we found in one productive stretch.

**NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – We heard one "chinking" from the dense vegetation along Dawson Creek, and from some thick scrub on the savanna itself. [\*]

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Our first was a female tangling with a young male Summer Tanager in a big dead tree in Indian Church. We spotted a male (back on, unfortunately, so we didn't get a look at his colorful throat) later on the same walk. [b]

**BLUE BUNTING** (*Cyanocompsa parellina*) – A territorial male along one of the trails at the Lamanai ruins was a master at landing just out of view. A female with a mixed flock near the sugar mill was much more sedate.

**BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – A few seen in open areas around Lamanai, including a male perched up in a weedy field among the houses in Indian Church. [b]

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – A couple of males winged past as we motored along the edge of the New Lagoon on our sunset cruise.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – We spotted a few perched up on fence posts during our drive through Mennonite country, and had close views of a pair rummaging in the grass under some pines at the edge of the Douglas Da Silva forestry camp.

**MELODIOUS BLACKBIRD** (*Dives dives*) – Abundant throughout, with particularly nice looks at several doing their yodeling, body-pumping courtship displays in Indian Church. Their songs were certainly a regular part of the tour soundtrack!

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Particularly common in the open areas around Lamanai, where they gathered in noisy flocks to show off for each other.

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – At least two in the same cattle shed as the next species in Mennonite country. Males of this smaller species look quite thick-necked.

**GIANT COWBIRD** (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – Our first was a panting, spread-winged male doing his best to impress the nearby ladies in a cattle shed in the Mennonite community. We had even nicer looks at others foraging in a flowering tree near the Montezuma Oropendola colony at Caracol -- where they were also probably keeping an eye out for potential foster parents for their offspring.

**BLACK-COWLED ORIOLE** (*Icterus prosthemelas*) – Regular around Lamanai, where they frequented the flowering trees, with others along the Rio Frio Caves road.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) – Common in the flowering trees around Indian Church, with a dozen or more seen at once on some days. This is a winter visitor to much of Central America. [b]

**HOODED ORIOLE** (*Icterus cucullatus*) – A few seen among the Orchard and Black-cowled Orioles in a big pink flowering tree in Indian Church one afternoon.

**YELLOW-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus chrysater*) – One preened in a bush near the start of the Coffee Grove trail at Hidden Valley, showing its diagnostic yellow back nicely. We saw others elsewhere on the Mountain Pine Ridge.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – Another winter visitor, seen in far fewer numbers than the ubiquitous Orchard Orioles. Our first was a female seen in the flowering trees at the end of the LOL driveway. We spotted a male in the same big pink-flowered tree as our Hooded Orioles. [b]

**YELLOW-BILLED CACIQUE** (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) – Two danced around us in the bushes around the parking lot at Lamanai Outpost Lodge, giving us brief views as they perched in the open or flitted across the road.

**MONTEZUMA OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – A few fly-bys early in the tour, but our best looks came in one of the plazas at Caracol, where a noisy, burgeoning colony worked on building and refurbishing their nests. The male's courtship display -- a quivering-winged, raised-tail somersault off his perch -- is pretty entertaining! [N]

#### Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

**SCRUB EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia affinis*) – After hearing one calling during our savanna walk, we had super views of an eye-level male along Irish Creek. Males of this species have a dark purplish-black chin and throat.

**YELLOW-THROATED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) – Easily the most common of the trip's euphonias, seen nearly every day around Lamanai -- including pairs in the flowering trees of Indian Church. Males of this species are yellow right up to their chins.

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## MAMMALS

**COMMON OPOSSUM** (*Didelphis marsupialis*) – One peered at us from the frond of a big palm tree near the ultralight runway. It froze for long minutes, before finally turning tail and scuttling back down into a denser part of the tree.

**LONG-NOSED BAT** (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) – A group of 23 or 24 (depending on the day) hung to the bottom of a big branch over the Lamanai boat dock, looking like little brown stars. We discovered, on our last day there, that at least 5 of them had tiny dark brown babies clinging to their chests.

**GREATER BULLDOG BAT** (*Noctilio leporinus*) – With some skillful boat handling and spotlight wielding, Eduardo gave us all some great looks at one of these big fishing bats -- which proved surprisingly rusty in color.

**YUCATAN HOWLER MONKEY** (*Alouatta pigra*) – Quite common in the lowlands, with the gang sprawled along the limbs of a big tree at Lamanai proving particularly entertaining. We also enjoyed the antics of the small youngster venturing ever further afield from his watchful mother a few days later.

**YUCATAN SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus yucatanensis*) – Our best views came at the Lamanai ruins, where we found one on a branch right over the Sugar Mill trail.

**DEPPE'S SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus deppei*) – We spotted one of these small squirrels along the road down to the Rio Frio cave.

**CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – One nibbled on something under the trees along the ultralight runway, holding the tidbit daintily in its front paws.

**WHITE-NOSED COATI** (*Nasua narica*) – One wandered around under the trees behind the shops at the Lamanai ruins, its tail sticking straight up in the air. This inquisitive species is related to the raccoons.

**WHITE-LIPPED PECCARY** (*Tayassu pecari*) – Hmm... I don't have a code for smelled and heard only! We heard a big herd of them crashing off through the undergrowth along Irish Creek, and then smelled their distinctive musky scent as we rounded the next bend in the river. [\*]

### Herps

**GREEN IGUANA** (*Iguana iguana*) – We spotted two of these big iguanas within yards of each other in a tree along the New Lagoon, seen during our Spotlight Safari. As we saw, Green Iguanas in the northern part of their range (i.e. Costa Rica and north) are orange -- despite their common name!

**BLACK SPINY-TAILED IGUANA** (*Ctenosaura similis*) – One legged it across the road in front of the van as we drove towards the Lamanai airstrip on the day we transferred to the mountains. This species tends to be a bit smaller than the last, and is much more cryptically patterned.

**STRIPED BASILISK** (*Basiliscus vittatus*) – One clinging to tall grass along the edge of the New Lagoon looked long and skinny in the spotlight beam during our night cruise. Fortunately for Carol, who missed that one, we found another, even bigger one on our drive to Caracol.

**MORELET'S CROCODILE** (*Crocodylus moreleti*) – One gave us quite the toothy grin as it laid on a log along the New River during the first transfer from the airport at the beginning of the tour. We saw others (little more than a few bumps and a ripple) as we motored across the New Lagoon, and spotted another hauled out on a big rock in the Guacamayo River during our drive to Caracol.

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### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 225 bird taxa and 9 mammal taxa**