



Field Guides Tour Report

LESSER ANTILLES 2016

Apr 11, 2016 to Apr 25, 2016

Jesse Fagan

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



Montserrat Volcano looms over the area of Richmond Hill which was destroyed in the eruptions beginning in 1995. Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.

10 islands, 14 days, 14 flights, 8 hotels, 1 visit to the emergency room, drive on the right, drive on the left,...you get the picture. It requires a lot of action and movement to see these birds! And see them we did. It was another successful island-hopping adventure this year, and the logistics worked out fine on this logistically complicated tour. Even island time seemed faster. Mark recovered in fine fashion. And we also got all the potential endemics.

It is hard to pick just one favorite. Dennis liked the Whistling Warbler (indeed, tops for a couple of folks), Bill enjoyed our Grenada Dove looks (possibly the best ever!), St. Vincent Parrot got a nod, Sharon thought the Brown Trembler was the coolest, Mark and Linda picked the Purple-throated Carib and Montserrat Oriole, respectively. However, Daphne's favorite stole the show for most -- our Rufous-throated Solitaire encounter on Dominica. The song alone would do it.

And which island was your favorite? All agreed with Montserrat. Our trip out to Richmond Hill to see the devastation caused by the volcano was memorable. And lunch at JJ's wasn't bad either. But I think the hospitality and warmth shared by Scriber and Blacker is what touched us the most. Our group also enjoyed Dominica, which is wilder than most islands. So, maybe that's it -- we want islands that feel and look like islands. I like that, mahn.

Thanks again to all our local guides and operators on the islands. And thank you for traveling with us. All the best in 2016 and beyond!

--Jesse Fagan (aka motmot) from Lima, Peru

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

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – Three were on the island of Barbuda.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL (*Anas bahamensis*) – A pair were hanging out in the small pond with the teal.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Good numbers on "Coot Pond" on Martinique. Too bad we didn't see the coots!

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus*) – Several distant birds flying around the cliffs at Little Harbour, Montserrat.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Most islands and most days of the tour, but our visit to Codrington Bay (on Barbuda) was most satisfying. This is the largest frigatebird colony in the Caribbean supporting over 2500 pairs.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*) – Our first were on Grenada, but later on a few other islands.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Not common (or seen) on the windward (southern) islands. Our first was on Dominica and most were juveniles.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Not many, but one on Guadeloupe and a couple on Barbuda.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Not super common, but seen on most of the islands. Our best numbers were on Grenada (5).

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Throughout the islands.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Also seen on many islands. Our first were on Grenada.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Singles on several islands.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One migrant (not a resident bird) was seen on Grenada.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

HOOK-BILLED KITE (GRENADA) (*Chondrohierax uncinatus mirus*) – Linda spotted a pair soaring above our vehicle. They were driving off a Broad-winged Hawk. Way cool!

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – Good numbers seen on St. Vincent (the only island where they are found in the Lesser Antilles).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus insulicola*) – [Antigua] One seen on a telephone post as we drove to the airport.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus rivierei*) – This subspecies occurs on the "middle" islands. We saw our first on St. Lucia, but again on Dominica and Martinique.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus antillarum*) – Seen on Barbados up to St. Vincent where fairly common.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – A first for the tour. An immature was seen on Barbuda.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

COMMON GALLINULE (AMERICAN) (*Gallinula galeata cerceris*) – Uncommon throughout the islands. Our first was on Grenada.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Seen on Antigua and Barbuda.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – A pair in the mangroves on Grenada.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Also small numbers in the mangroves on Grenada.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Found on most islands.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A pair in the mangroves on Grenada.

WILLET (EASTERN) (*Tringa semipalmata semipalmata*) – We had breeding "Eastern" Willets on Barbuda. Possibly we saw "Western" Willets on Guadeloupe, which appears to be rare to uncommon in the Lesser Antilles.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Seen on the island of Grenada.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Just one along the edge of the small pond on Barbuda.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – One feeding with the Least Sandpiper. It made for nice comparisons.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – On most of the islands, and most in full breeding plumage.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Fairly common offshore on most of the islands.

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Not common. Small numbers on Dominica and Barbuda.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Common on all of the islands. [H]

SCALY-NAPED PIGEON (*Patagioenas squamosa*) – Seen on most of the islands where fairly common.

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – On the extreme northern islands. Common on Antigua and Barbuda.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decacto*) – Three years ago this species was absent from most of the islands. Times have changed. Found on nearly all the islands now. [H]

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Common throughout the islands.

RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE (MARTINIQUE) (*Geotrygon montana martinica*) – Heard on St. Vincent and good numbers seen in the forest of St. Lucia.

BRIDLED QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon mystacea*) – Awesome scope views on Guadeloupe.

GRENADA DOVE (*Leptotila wellsi*) – Fantastic looks at this rare dove. [E]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Now seems to be fairly common on some of the northern islands. This species was very rare or absent three years ago.

ZENaida DOVE (*Zenaida aurita*) – Common on most of the islands.

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata stenura*) – Found on the windward islands from Barbados to St. Vincent.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – Mark was happy to see his lifer on Grenada, but we observed them again on other islands.

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Not real common, but seen on several islands from Barbados to Montserrat.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (LESSER ANTILLES) (*Tyto alba insularis*) – Awesome encounter with a responsive bird on Grenada. Daphne got some killer shots. Heard again on St. Vincent.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

RUFOUS NIGHTJAR (ST. LUCIA) (*Antrostomus rufus otiosus*) [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

BLACK SWIFT (*Cypseloides niger*) – Small groups over the runway on Dominica and again over the Chutes de Carbet on Guadeloupe.

LESSER ANTILLEAN SWIFT (*Chaetura martinica*) – Our first on St. Vincent and our last on Martinique.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT (*Glaucis hirsutus*) – Several (quickly!) feeding on the Heliconia at Grande Etang on Grenada.

PURPLE-THROATED CARIB (*Eulampis jugularis*) – Found in the highlands of most islands with mountains like St. Vincent, Dominica, and Guadeloupe.

GREEN-THROATED CARIB (*Eulampis holosericeus*) – Seen on most islands from Barbados to Antigua.

BLUE-HEADED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cyanophaea bicolor*) – Seen on Dominica, one of just two islands where it is found.

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (LESSER ANTILLES) (*Orthorhynchus cristatus exilis*) – From St. Lucia north to Antigua and Barbuda where fairly common. These individuals have all green forecrowns (or crests).

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (ST. VINCENT) (*Orthorhynchus cristatus ornatus*) – Seen a few times on St. Vincent.

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (BARBADOS) (*Orthorhynchus cristatus cristatus*) – Common on Barbados. These individuals have the tips of the their crests blue.

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (GRENADINES AND GRENADA) (*Orthorhynchus cristatus emigrans*) – Seen well in the dry forest (Mt. Hartmann, for example) on Grenada.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – One seen by the group on Dominica.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

GAUDELouPE WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes herminieri*) – We just drove around until we found one! It was a fun, exciting experience. [E]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (EASTERN CARIBBEAN) (*Falco sparverius caribaeorum*) – Singles on some of the islands, but, generally, uncommon.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

RED-NECKED PARROT (*Amazona arausiaca*) – Seen well on Dominica where it is the most common parrot. [E]

ST. LUCIA PARROT (*Amazona versicolor*) – Good numbers around, but more often heard. We had several nice looks at close flying birds from the overlook. [E]

IMPERIAL PARROT (*Amazona imperialis*) – Two distant birds calling and seen flying in the mist. Not real great, but hey, we got 'em. In the afternoon, we had better looks at one bird flying across the top of the mountain. This is always one of the hardest LA endemics to see well. [E]

ST. VINCENT PARROT (*Amazona guildingii*) – Fly arounds and flybys from the lookout. Birds perched in the forest seemed to get away. [E]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

CARIBBEAN ELAENIA (*Elaenia martinica*) – Common on all the islands, at least by voice.

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – Seen on Grenada and again on St. Vincent.

LESSER ANTILLEAN PEWEE (*Contopus latirostris*) – First on St. Lucia (where formerly a separate species), then again on Guadeloupe.

GRENADA FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus nugator*) – Seen on Grenada and heard on St. Vincent.

LESSER ANTILLEAN FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus oberi*) – St. Lucia and Dominica where fairly common.

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Super common on all the islands.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO (*Vireo altiloquus*) – Super common from St. Vincent north, but just arriving back to Barbados (where we had one).

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

CARIBBEAN MARTIN (*Progne dominicensis*) – Small numbers on most of the islands.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Over the Barbuda runway.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (DOMINICA) (*Troglodytes aedon rufescens*)

HOUSE WREN (ST. LUCIA) (*Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus*)

HOUSE WREN (ST. VINCENT) (*Troglodytes aedon musicus*)

HOUSE WREN (GRENADA) (*Troglodytes aedon grenadensis*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUFIOUS-THROATED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes genibarbis*) – Lovely views on Dominica.

COCOA THRUSH (LESSER ANTILLEAN) (*Turdus fumigatus personus*) – Seen well on St. Vincent.

SPECTACLED THRUSH (*Turdus nudigenis*) – Good numbers on the windward islands.

FOREST THRUSH (*Turdus lherminieri*) – Lots on the trails at Chutes de Carbet (Guadeloupe), but again nicely on Montserrat.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

WHITE-BREASTED THRASHER (*Ramphocinclus brachyurus*) – Seen well on St. Lucia (where very difficult) and again on Martinique.

SCALY-BREASTED THRASHER (*Allenia fusca*) – Of the thrashers, this is the most common in the Lesser Antilles.

PEARLY-EYED THRASHER (*Margarops fuscatus*) – Found on the leeward islands where uncommon (though they become more common as you move north).

BROWN TREMBLER (*Cinlocerthia ruficauda*) – Endemic to LA, the tremblers are always fun to watch. Seen first on St. Vincent and again on Dominica.

GRAY TREMBLER (*Cinlocerthia gutturalis*) – Seen well on St. Lucia. Only found on SL and Martinique.

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – Pretty common throughout most of the islands.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

WHISTLING WARBLER (*Catharopeza bishopi*) – Wow, so good this year! Nice spotting, Mark. We lucked out and had one in the open from the lookout. A real treat. Endemic to St. Vincent. [E]

PLUMBEOUS WARBLER (*Setophaga plumbea*) – Lovely looks on Dominica and again on Guadeloupe.

YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia bartholemica*) – [Guadeloupe and Montserrat]

YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia melanopectera*) – [St. Lucia and Dominica]

YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia ruficapilla*) – Of the "Golden" Yellow Warbler complex, this population on Martinique is the most unusual. Instead of showing rufous on the crown (as most other Golden's) it has an entirely rufous head, like the "Mangrove" Yellow Warbler from the mainland. Go figure.

BARBUDA WARBLER (*Setophaga subita*) – I heard it singing from the plane when we landed. Common on the island. [E]

ST. LUCIA WARBLER (*Setophaga delicata*) [E]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

LESSER ANTILLEAN TANAGER (*Tangara cucullata*) – Nice seeing them on two different islands (Grenada and St. Vincent).

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola bartholemica*) – Most of the leeward islands, from Dominica to Barbuda.

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola martinicana*) – St. Lucia and Martinique.

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola barbadensis*) – Barbados.

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola atrata*) – St. Vincent, which included black morphs (the rotten bananas).

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola aterrima*) – Grenada, which also included dark morphs.

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris bicolor*) – Fairly common on most of the islands.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis coryi*) – As with the Bananaquits, they differ subtly between the islands. The tendency is to go from lots of red in the face (above the eye and on the throat) in the south, to blacker faces and paler gray underparts in the north. This subspecies we saw on Montserrat, where bullfinches are rare and local.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis ridgwayi*) – On Barbuda.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis dominicana*) – Dominica and Guadeloupe.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis noctis*) – Martinique.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis sclateri*) – St. Lucia.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis crissalis*) – St. Vincent.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis grenadensis*) – Grenada.

BARBADOS BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla barbadensis*) – Of course, found on Barbados where common at the breakfast table. [E]

ST. LUCIA BLACK FINCH (*Melanospiza richardsoni*) – Always tough. We saw a pair near our lookout for the parrot. Also, another young male singing. [E]

LESSER ANTILLEAN SALTATOR (*Saltator albicollis*) – Good numbers from St. Lucia (on the grounds of the hotel) north to Antigua.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris guadeloupensis*) – The differences in island subspecies lies with the females. The tendency is for females to become grayer as one moves south to north. This subspecies is found from Dominica north to Barbuda.

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris inflexirostris*) – St. Lucia and Martinique.

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris contrusus*) – St. Vincent.

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris lutosus*) – Grenada.

CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris fortirostris*) – Barbados.

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Seen on most of the islands.

ST. LUCIA ORIOLE (*Icterus laudabilis*) – Always one of my favorites. Seen well in the lush forest on St. Lucia. [E]

MONTSEERRAT ORIOLE (*Icterus oberi*) – Thanks to Scriber and Blacker we were able to watch a pair near an active nest. [E]

MARTINIQUE ORIOLE (*Icterus bonana*) – Whew! We really had to work at it! Oddly silent and I wonder if they were nesting at this time of year?

[E]

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

ANTILLEAN EUPHONIA (*Euphonia musica*) – A female briefly in the forest on St. Lucia.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Singles on Grenada and St. Vincent (at the airport). [I]

Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA (*Lonchura punctulata*) – A huge flock in the grassy lot while we looked for the woodpecker on Guadeloupe. [I]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – Barbados, Grenada, and St. Vincent were presumably this species, but some larger bats had us scratching our heads (there appears to be around 14 species on St. Vincent!).

ANTILLEAN AGOUTI (*Dasyprocta antillensis*) – One quickly crossed the trail at The Syndicate (Dominica).

HUMPBACK WHALE (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) – Fantastic show from the cliffs of Two Foot Bay (Barbuda).

SMALL ASIAN MONGOOSE (*Herpestes javanicus*) – Several along the road on St. Lucia. [I]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 124 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa