



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Oaxaca II 2016**

Feb 13, 2016 to Feb 20, 2016

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



*This view from the Zapotec ruins of Yagul shows some of the dry thornscrub habitat that flanks the beautiful Oaxaca Valley. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.*

Pepe and I were excited to share this adventure through the Oaxaca region with you. From the cool heights of Cerro San Felipe to the dry Pacific Slope and with all the good food and wonderful culture in between, we had an exciting week. With the exceptionally dry conditions, bird activity was a bit slower than average, but we persevered and made some memorable sightings of the fantastic birds that this area has to offer. Ocellated Thrasher, Slaty Vireo, Dwarf Jay, Russet-crowned Motmot... oh, the list of bird highlights is quite long.

On our first day, we covered the Teotitlán del Valle area, including the Presa Piedra Azul (reservoir). The reservoir held a continuing Reddish Egret, quite a surprise in this dry valley. Moving up into the forest above the spring at "El Jilguero," we also enjoyed White-striped Woodcreeper, Rufous-capped Brushfinch, a great scope view of a Northern Pygmy-Owl, and our first of many Gray Silky-Flycatchers. The views of Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo were very special, indeed!

We rose early on Day II for a trip up into the mountains. We birded from La Cumbre up a dirt road running through the beautiful forests of Cerro San Felipe. Here we encountered the local (and distinctive!) form of Strong-billed Woodcreeper, and combed through mixed flocks of warblers, including migrants from the north such as Townsend's Warbler as well as exciting residents like Red Warbler and Golden-browed Warbler. A big highlight came when Dwarf Jays appeared with the flocks of Gray-barred Wrens and Steller's Jays that we were following around in the highland pine forest. This area is the best spot to see this handsome and elusive species, and we were fortunate to get great views of approximately 10 individuals during the day.

The next morning, we headed out of the Oaxaca Valley and toward Totolapan, where we sampled the dry forest of the Pacific Slope. Here we found a pair of Russet-crowned Motmots, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls, White-lored Gnatcatchers, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Orange-fronted Parakeet, and more before we headed back to Rancho Zapata for lunch. The birding didn't stop during the lunchtime mezcal-making demonstration, with a splendid Plain-capped Starthroat visiting cactus flowers behind the restaurant. In the afternoon, we visited the Zapotec ruins at Mitla and Yagul, and even had a brief view of Beautiful Hummingbird in addition to a pair of soaring White-tailed Hawks. Jorge gave us a fantastic introduction to Zapotec history while we walked around the ruins.

We kicked off Day 4 with a visit to the huge Zapotec ruins at Monte Alban. While the birding started out slow in the cool early morning, we rallied and enjoyed some interesting migrants around the ruins. Jorge gave us another fabulous walking tour of this important Zapotec site, and we occasionally paused to take in a Cliff Swallow, Rock Wren, Lazuli Bunting, and others!

In the evening, we headed up to Cerro San Felipe for a picnic dinner. As darkness gathered, we had immediate success with a pair of Mexican Whip-

poor-wills in the spotlight, but the mountain's mysterious Fulvous Owls played coy and didn't reveal themselves to us.

We made a return visit to Teotitlán del Valley on our fifth full day, scoring good success with Oaxaca Sparrow and Ocellated Thrasher this time. Lunch was at the famous Restaurante Tlamanalli, where the Mendoza sisters prepared a wonderful lunch and also demonstrated traditional weaving techniques. Several group members left with some of the fantastic locally woven rugs.

Our final full day took us back into the misty mountains of La Cumbre. On the way up into the mountains, we stopped along the highway to bird some scrub forest and eventually had fabulous views of a foraging Slaty Vireo, one of the most psychedelic birds of the tour! Up at higher elevation, we birded several stretches of the Yuvila Road, and although the area was living up to its "cloud forest" description, we did have some wonderful sightings. Spot-crowned Woodcreepers, Brown-backed Solitaires, more Red Warblers, and an astonishing flock of more than 50 Gray Silky-Flycatchers gave us plenty to talk about. We wrapped up the birding with Berylline Hummingbird, Clay-colored Thrush, Rufous-backed Robin, and a bunch of migrants just outside our rooms on the grounds of our hotel.

In addition to some fine birding, the dining experiences on this tour were quite memorable. While we had the opportunities to sample a wide variety of distinctive Oaxacan fare, I mostly chose to stick with mole negro at most of our dinner restaurants, enjoying the variety between restaurants of the wonderfully complex sauce. Others branched out and tried the other moles, and some in the group even tried some truly exotic things like dried grasshoppers (chapulines)!

Thank you all for helping to make our trip through Oaxaca so rich an experience. We hope to see you again on a future tour!

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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

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

**AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) – One was at Presa Piedra Azul on our first day.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) – Six were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas crecca*) – Five were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Six of these stiff-tails were at Presa Piedra Azul during our stop there on the first morning of the tour.

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

**WEST MEXICAN CHACHALACA** (*Ortalis poliocephala*) – Perhaps half the group got to see these Mexican endemic Cracids perched in a roadside tree, but EVERYONE got to see them sail across the road in front of us. [E]

### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**LONG-TAILED WOOD-PARTRIDGE** (*Dendrortyx macroura*) – We heard, but did not see, this forest skulker near the bathrooms at La Cumbre. [E]

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LEAST GREBE** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – We had great views of these tiny, golden-eyed grebes from the dam at Presa Piedra Azul.

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

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Three were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Seven were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Two were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**REDDISH EGRET** (*Egretta rufescens*) – One of these coastal egrets was a nice bonus at Presa Piedra Azul. For a small reservoir in a dry valley, this spot had a pretty nice variety of waders!

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – We saw these small, white egrets on several occasions while driving through the Valley. Our first was at Presa Piedra Azul, and we also saw another at Rancho Zapata.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – Four were along the edge of Presa Piedra Azul.

### Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Common, and more widespread than Black Vulture during our trip.

### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*) – We spotted these handsome raptors along the roadside a few times. One was perched on a transmission tower behind a roadside flower stand, and we shared scope views with the flower salesman!

**COOPER'S HAWK** (*Accipiter cooperii*) – We saw these lanky hawks on at least 3 occasions, including a good soaring view at Teotitlán del Valle.

**WHITE-TAILED HAWK** (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) – Two of these long-winged Buteo hawks were soaring over the ruins at Yagul.

**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – Our best views were of two dark morph birds soaring over the Hotel Mision de Los Angeles.

**ZONE-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo albonotatus*) – One made a quick flyby at the La Cumbre restroom stop.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Fairly common in the Cerro San Felipe area.

### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) – About 45 were at Presa Piedra Azul.

### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Several of these familiar plovers were foraging along the edge of Presa Piedra Azul.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – Three bobbed along the edge of Presa Piedra Azul.

**WILSON'S SNIBE** (*Gallinago delicata*) – One was hunkered down in a seep near the the dam at Presa Piedra Azul. Tough to see!

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Common in Oaxaca City. [H]

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – These large forest pigeons flew over us on several occasions on Cerro San Felipe, and we had some perched views as well.

**INCA DOVE** (*Columbina inca*) – Quite common around Oaxaca City.

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) – Our best views were in the dry "motmot creekbed" on the day we headed over to the Pacific Slope.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Abundant in the Oaxaca Valley.

Strigidae (Owls)

**FLAMMULATED OWL** (*Psiloscoptes flammeolus*) – We heard one tooting distantly during our nocturnal excursion to Cerro San Felipe. [\*]

**NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (MOUNTAIN)** (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*) – We encountered these small owls in the upper part of Teotitlán del Valle and also on Cerro San Felipe. The scope views we had at TdV were pretty special, and we also appreciated the songbird flock that the owl attracted!

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Three of these tiny owls put in appearances during our Pacific Slope excursion. Spectacular scope views of two!

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL** (*Antrostomus arizonae*) – The highlight of our night birding on Cerro San Felipe was the scope view of a male Mexican Whip-poor-will on a roadside rock wall. The female also lounged around nearby.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**GREEN VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri thalassinus*) – These beautiful hummers were everywhere around El Jilguero above Teotitlán del Valle.

**PLAIN-CAPPED STARThROAT** (*Helioaster constantii*) – One was trampling cactus flowers behind Rancho Zapata. When it first appeared, we interrupted the ongoing mezcal-making demonstration to take a better look.

**BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Good views near El Jilguero above Teotitlán del Valle. The big white tail spots and piercing call helped us all lock on to this huge hummer.

**BEAUTIFUL HUMMINGBIRD** (*Calothorax pulcher*) – One popped up briefly for most of the group during our archaeological visit to the ruins at Yagul. [E]

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) – A female came in and perched briefly above us in the first dry, thornscrub-covered creekbed we surveyed on the Pacific Slope.

**DUSKY HUMMINGBIRD** (*Cynanthus sordidus*) – Fairly common and widespread in the Oaxaca Valley. [E]

**BERYLLINE HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia beryllina*) – Our best experience came on the grounds of our hotel. The last afternoon of the tour provided for some excellent views of this rusty-winged hummingbird. [E]

**GREEN-FRONTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia viridifrons*) – One paused briefly alongside the group on the trail where we saw the motmots on the Pacific Slope, but few in the group connected with it.

**WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – Common in patches of montane forest with ground-level flowers.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

**ELEGANT TROGON** (*Trogon elegans*) – Woah! A skulky male put in a few appearances during our walk in the dry "motmot" creekbed on the Pacific Slope.

**MOUNTAIN TROGON** (*Trogon mexicanus*) – These fine birds were fairly common in mountain forest around Cerro San Felipe and Teotitlán del Valle, but we only had good views on a few occasions.

Momotidae (Motmots)

**RUSSET-CROWNED MOTMOT** (*Momotus mexicanus*) – A pair of these handsome beasts posed nicely for us in the sun along the thornscrub trail we birded near Totolapan on the Pacific Slope. They even hung out long enough for good scope views!

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – One at Presa Piedra Azula was notable.

**GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Two were at Presa Piedra Azul.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**ACORN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – We heard these raucous woodpeckers from the slopes above the road near El Jilguero above Teotitlán del Valle.

**GRAY-BREASTED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes hypopolius*) – This handsome, endemic woodpecker put on repeated good shows in scrubby areas of the Oaxaca Valley with large cactus. [E]

**GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – Two of these *Melanerpes* put on a surprise show in a dry creekbed we investigated near Totolapan.

**YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – We saw these northern migrants at two different sites near Teotitlán del Valle.

**LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides scalaris*) – These "desert Downies" were near Teotitlán del Valle and at Monte Alban.

**HAIRY WOODPECKER** (*Picoides villosus*) – Fairly common in montane forest on Cerro San Felipe.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus cafer*) – We found these large, striking woodpeckers a few times in montane forest.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – On a few of our drives, we found these large, dramatic falcons near the valley floor.

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – Seen most days.



Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

**ORANGE-FRONTED PARAKEET** (*Eupsittula canicularis*) – A flock bombed past us quickly during our first walk in one of the arroyos near Totolapan on the Pacific Slope. The identification was more contextual than evidence-based, in this case!

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

**STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*) – We ended up finding ~6 of these huge woodcreepers in the mysterious forests of Cerro San Felipe. This taxon is vocally distinctive, sounding quite different from populations to the south.

**WHITE-STRIPED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes leucogaster*) – Our first woodcreeper of the trip was a nice White-striped that called and showed rather well just above our picnic site above Teotitlán del Valle. [E]

**SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes affinis affinis*) – Even though the cloud forest was pretty socked in, we managed some great close views of these handsome woodcreepers on the Yuvila Rd. near La Cumbre.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET** (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – One of these snub-bill tyrants called and showed well for us in one of the dry creekbeds near Totolapan.

**TUFTED FLYCATCHER** (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – Fairly common in forest and edge habitat in the middle elevations that we visited on this tour. The trees below the dam at Presa Piedra Azul were filled with these little guys.

**GREATER PEWEE** (*Contopus pertinax*) – We heard "Jose Maria" singing near El Jilguero and at Garbage Gulch, but we didn't see him!

**HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax hammondi*) – Fairly common in the mountains. We identified these *Empidonax* flycatchers by their sharp "peep" calls and the combination of their stubby bills and fairly long primary projection.

**GRAY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax wrightii*) – One of these tail-dippers was below the dam at Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning in Oaxaca. This is about as far south as the species is found in winter.

**DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – We saw these "whit"ing Empids on several occasions, with particularly good looks at Monte Alban.

**BLACK PHOEBE** (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Two were at Presa Piedra Azul.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Fairly common in the Oaxaca Valley, including ruins sites.

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – One of these slim, yellow-bellied *Myiarchus* showed very nicely for us at Garbage Gulch.

**ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – We encountered a few during our surveys of dry thornscrub in the eastern part of the Oaxaca Valley and near Totolapan, too.

**NUTTING'S FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus nuttingi*) – A few showed well and eventually called back to us above Teotitlán del Valle and at Garbage Gulch.

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Only a few sightings - 2 were at Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning.

**SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – Five were acting VERY social along the stream near Garbage Gulch.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – One trilled for us during our excursion to the Pacific Slope near Totolapan.

**CASSIN'S KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – This was the common kingbird during the tour.

**THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – We heard and saw these stout, handsome tyrants on several occasions. The first was in the midst of the excitement over the Elegant Trogon near Totolapan, and others were presiding over the ruins sites at Yagul and Monte Alban.

**WESTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – We scoped one at Monte Alban in order to see its pale head and white-edged black tail, helping us to separate it from Cassin's Kingbird.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

**ROSE-THROATED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – Three, including an excitedly singing male, were in the vicinity of the Dwarf Jay flock on Cerro San Felipe.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – We saw some of the southernmost Loggerhead Shrikes in the world below the pueblo at Teotitlán del Valle! They were in the same cactus-scrub habitat as our first Gray-breasted Woodpeckers.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

**SLATY VIREO** (*Vireo brevipennis*) – Phew! This one took a while, but we eventually scored some fabulous views near the road at Garbage Gulch. This stunning vireo showed off at close range, and its grays and greens contrasted nicely with the red berry that it woofed down while we gawked.

[E]

**DWARF VIREO** (*Vireo nelsoni*) – Part of the group had a brief view of one of these tiny vireos at Garbage Gulch, but it remained elusive for most. [E]

**PLUMBEOUS VIREO** (*Vireo plumbeus*) – One showed nicely for the group in conifers just outside the Colibri restaurant.

**HUTTON'S VIREO** (*Vireo huttoni*) – Most of these Ruby-crowned Kinglet-lookalikes were on Cerro San Felipe.

**WARBLING VIREO** (*Vireo gilvus*) – These winterers were fairly widespread, and we saw them on most days in the field.

**CHESTNUT-SIDED SHRIKE-VIREO** (*Vireolanius melitophrys*) – WOW! At least 2 of these stunners put on a great show for us on the winding road about Teotitlán del Valle.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**DWARF JAY** (*Cyanolyca nanus*) – Yip yip! After waiting and watching and listening, we received a fantastic visit from a roving band of Dwarf Jays. The first ones we saw were sky high, mixed in with Gray-barred Wrens and Steller's Jays, but later, a flock of about 8 birds put in a much better performance. [E]

**WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY** (*Calocitta formosa*) – One was seen briefly, mostly in flight, by part of the group near our Russet-crowned Motmot spot.

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – The richly colored birds we saw in the mountains belong to the Oaxacan subspecies *restricta*. These beautiful jays were a common sight in mixed foraging flocks in the conifer forests on Cerro San Felipe.

**WESTERN SCRUB-JAY (SUMICHRAS'TS)** (*Aphelocoma californica sumichrasti*) – Good looks in dry forest near El Jilguero (above Teotitlán del

Valle) and Garbage Gulch.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Surprisingly uncommon - one was soaring over Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – These mousey-brown swallows were zooming around Presa Piedra Azul and Monte Alban.

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – This was the common and widespread swallow that we found in many habitats on the tour.

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – One was circling over the ruins at Monte Alban with the Violet-green and Northern Rough-winged Swallows.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**MEXICAN CHICKADEE** (*Poecile sclateri*) – These raspy-voiced chickadees showed nicely for us on Cerro San Felipe.

**BRIDLED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – These parids formed the core of several flocks that we found along the higher switchbacks above Teotitlán del Valle.

*Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)*

**BUSHTIT (BLACK-EARED)** (*Psaltirparus minimus melanotis*) – A few of these strikingly plumaged, high contrast Bushtits popped up in response to pishing near El Jilguero while we waited for hummingbirds.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta carolinensis*) – A few of these tree-climbers "yank"ed at us from the mixed forest above Teotitlán del Valle.

*Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**BROWN CREEPER** (*Certhia americana*) – Several of these beautifully cryptic pieces of flying tree bark showed well on Cerro San Felipe.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**ROCK WREN** (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – Fairly common at the ruins sites, especially Monte Alban. Their ringing songs frequently accompanied Jorge's rich explanations of archaeology and Zapotec culture.

**CANYON WREN** (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – During our first morning at Presa Piedra Azul, we heard one of these wrens singing its cascading, whistling song in the distant rocks.

**HOUSE WREN (BROWN-THROATED)** (*Troglodytes aedon brunneicollis*) – We didn't encounter many of these wrens on this tour, but the one we did see well on the Yuvila Rd. put on quite a show at our feet, showing off the rich brown tones and barred flanks that help set it apart from its northern cousins.

**BEWICK'S WREN** (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Good views at Garbage Gulch and in the gardens at our hotel in Oaxaca City.

**GRAY-BARRED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus megalopterus*) – A common member of montane forest flocks. Similar in size and structure to Cactus Wrens, these stocky birds alerted us to their presence with harsh calls as they crept around bromeliads in the forest mid-story and canopy. [E]

**RUFIOUS-NAPED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – One of these large Pacific Slope wrens climbed around in a big cactus during our outing to the Totolapan area.

**BOUCARD'S WREN** (*Campylorhynchus jocosus*) – At dawn on our first morning, a pair of these fine wrens greeted us atop a huge cactus - the first Mexican endemic species of the trip! We saw and heard another later at Monte Alban. [E]

**GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN** (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – This little gnome climbed around the undergrowth along a stream on Cerro San Felipe, singing its tiny brains out but only showing itself briefly (though repeatedly).

*Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)*

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila caerulea*) – Quite common and widespread.

**WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER** (*Poliophtila albiloris*) – We saw a few of these contrasty gnatcatchers during our Pacific Slope excursion near Totolapan.

*Regulidae (Kinglets)*

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – Fairly common in flocks at higher elevation.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**BROWN-BACKED SOLITAIRE** (*Myadestes occidentalis*) – We heard the amazing, metallic cascade notes of these thrushes singing at many stops in montane forests. Up until our last day on the Yuvila Rd., we hadn't seen one at all, and then all of a sudden, we had one singing in the scope! Hearing the song of this bird is surely one of the highlights of birding in Mexico.

**RUSSET NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH** (*Catharus occidentalis*) – Several hopped out on the roads of Cerro San Felipe. These compact Catharus thrushes look like small Veeries. [E]

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – Common in the mountains near Cerro San Felipe and above Teotitlán del Valle.

**CLAY-COLORED THRUSH** (*Turdus grayi*) – Fairly common around our hotel in Oaxaca City.

**RUFIOUS-BACKED ROBIN** (*Turdus rufopalliatus*) – Regular in the evenings around the grounds of our hotel in Oaxaca City. [E]

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – We saw these familiar thrushes on just a few occasions in the mountains near La Cumbre.

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**BLUE MOCKINGBIRD** (*Melanotis caerulescens*) – Heard only, singing on a few occasions from thick scrub forest.

**CURVE-BILLED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma curvirostre*) – Good views at Presa Piedra Azul, Rancho Zapata, and the ruins at Yagul.

**OCELLATED THRASHER** (*Toxostoma ocellatum*) – This endemic mimid put up quite a fight to stay hidden from us during the tour, but we kept on searching and eventually prevailed, with good scope views of singing birds at Teotitlán del Valle and later at Garbage Gulch. Close enough to see the "ocelli" (eye spots) on the underparts! [E]

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Fairly common around small towns in the Oaxaca Valley.

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus rubescens*) – Five of these northern alpine breeders were walking along the edge of Presa Piedra Azul like tiny sandpipers.

Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

**GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER** (*Ptiliogonys cinereus*) – Our first were above Teotitlán del Valle, but we saw far more in the forests of Cerro San Felipe and the Yuvila Road. On our final day on the Yuvila Road, we found a bubbling flock of over 50 of these striking songbirds, and they posed for fabulous scope views.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

**OLIVE WARBLER** (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Very common in the pine forests of Cerro San Felipe.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia motacilla*) – One was calling and singing softly at El Jilguero above Teotitlán del Valle. This migrant was probably just a few weeks away from departing for its breeding grounds in the eastern United States.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – These stripey migrants showed well on a few occasions, including one particularly confiding individual at Garbage Gulch.

**CRESCENT-CHESTED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis superciliosa*) – Great views right above our heads on Cerro San Felipe.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Common and widespread.

**NASHVILLE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Common and widespread - we had a great experience on the last evening of the tour at our hotel in Oaxaca when we saw at least 12 individuals in the gardens!

**VIRGINIA'S WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – A few were in mixed flocks in dry, scrubby forests.

**MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – One posed nicely at Garbage Gulch just before we saw the Slaty Vireo.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S)** (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Quite common and widespread. About 25 were at Presa Piedra Azul and another 15 were on the grounds of our hotel.

**BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – Fairly common in middle elevations; for example, 5 were at El Jilguero on our second visit up above Teotitlán del Valle.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Common in montane forest, especially on Cerro San Felipe.

**HERMIT WARBLER** (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Fairly common on Cerro San Felipe, often in mixed flocks with Townsend's Warblers.

**RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (RUFIFRONS GROUP)** (*Basileuterus rufifrons rufifrons*) – Fairly common, though not in flock situations for the most part. We saw 5 at Monte Alban alone.

**GOLDEN-BROWED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus belli*) – Four were chipping together along a stream on Cerro San Felipe, though only one showed for a good, solid look. These are almost endemic to Mexico, but the range extends a bit into Northern Central America.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Quite common and widespread.

**RED-FACED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – These well-appointed warblers were at Cerro San Felipe and near El Jilguero as well.

**RED WARBLER** (*Cardellina rubra*) – Wow! These endemic shockers are quite common and not at all hard to see on Cerro San Felipe. [E]

**PAINTED REDSTART** (*Myioborus pictus*) – Three were near El Jilguero on our second visit.

**SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus miniatus*) – Both of our sightings came from the Teotitlán del Valle area - one was at Presa Piedra Azul and the other was near El Jilguero.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

**CINNAMON-BELLIED FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa baritula baritula*) – Our only sighting was in the hummingbird thicket around El Jilguero.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**BRIDLED SPARROW** (*Peucaea mystacalis*) – Actually quite common in the upper switchbacks above Teotitlán del Valle, in scrub forest. A few lingered on the roadsides and offered us some spectacular views. [E]

**GRASSHOPPER SPARROW** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – One popped up alongside us in a desert grassland as the sun rose on our first morning below Teotitlán del Valle.

**CHIPPING SPARROW** (*Spizella passerina*) – Common, and often in sizeable flocks.

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** (*Spizella pallida*) – We found two of these pale, earth-toned *Spizella* sparrows - one was at Presa Piedra Azul, and the other was atop the ruins at Monte Alban.

**LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*) – Reasonably common in the mid-elevation zone including Presa Piedra Azul and the Yagul ruins.

**CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH (CHESTNUT-CAPPED)** (*Arremon brunneinucha suttoni*) – With some effort, we eventually saw these Collared Towhee look-alikes in some thickets on Cerro San Felipe.

**YELLOW-EYED JUNCO** (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Common on Cerro San Felipe and adjacent highland areas.

**VESPER SPARROW** (*Poocetes gramineus*) – Two were in the road with Lark Sparrows below the pueblo at Teotitlán del Valle on our first morning.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – Subtly streaked and rather shy; we were fortunate to see these handsome sparrows at Presa Piedra Azul and Monte Alban.

**WHITE-THROATED TOWHEE** (*Melospiza albicollis*) – Very common in the Oaxaca Valley. [E]

**OAXACA SPARROW** (*Aimophila notosticta*) – On our second attempt above Teotitlán del Valle, we scored big-time, with really good, close views of this well-patterned endemic sparrow. [E]

**SPOTTED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo maculatus*) – Just a couple of these large, contrasty sparrows yowled at us from the bushes at high elevation during our mountain explorations.

**COLLARED TOWHEE** (*Pipilo ocai*) – We had nice views of this large, stocky approximation of a Chestnut-capped Brushfinch on several occasions. [E]

**RUFIOUS-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH** (*Atlappetes pileatus*) – Ooooo - this handsome bird played nice and showed very well under a squadron of hummingbirds at El Jilguero on our first day. [E]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

**HEPATIC TANAGER (NORTHERN)** (*Piranga flava hepatica*) – We saw these dusky-faced tanagers on multiple occasions above El Jilguero and also on Cerro San Felipe.

**SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – Our only sightings were at Presa Piedra Azul and at our picnic lunch site above El Jilguero.

**WESTERN TANAGER** (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – These lovely songbirds were in many locations during the week. We saw a handful of red-headed males.

**ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A male-female pair perched up on our last afternoon birding the hotel grounds in Oaxaca City.

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – These buffy grosbeaks gave us some nice views at Monte Alban and at La Cumbre.

**BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – Two were at Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning.

**LAZULI BUNTING** (*Passerina amoena*) – A female with bold wingbars fed along the edge of the ruins at Monte Alban.

**ORANGE-BREASTED BUNTING** (*Passerina leclancherii*) – Some crackerjack males and a few females were clearly highlights of our jaunt to the dry scrub of the Pacific Slope.

**VARIED BUNTING** (*Passerina versicolor*) – A female perched up and provided us with a nice ID puzzle when we birded the dry arroyos of Totolapan.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – One was in the desert grasslands below Teotitlán del Valle.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Fairly common around Oaxaca City and surrounding agricultural areas.

**BRONZED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Five were behind the restaurant Rancho Zapata.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE (ORCHARD)** (*Icterus spurius spurius*) – A frequent sight just outside our rooms at Hotel Mision de Los Angeles.

**STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus pustulatus*) – The jaunt to the Pacific Slope allowed us to find these large, colorful orioles in the thornscrub near Totolapan.

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus bullockii*) – Two were at Presa Piedra Azul, and another male showed along the Yuvila Rd. during our last day in the cloud forest.

**AUDUBON'S ORIOLE (DICKEY'S)** (*Icterus graduacauda dickeyae*) – A few "Dickey's" Orioles performed very well for scope views in the scrubby forest above Teotitlán del Valle. This is the southern subspecies of Audubon's Oriole. [E]

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – One showed briefly near the Scott's Oriole on Cerro San Felipe on Day II.

**SCOTT'S ORIOLE** (*Icterus parisorum*) – One perched up and sang in mixed forest on Cerro San Felipe. We scoped it at a distance during the hunt for Dwarf Jays.

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

**ELEGANT EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – After a frustrating first encounter on Cerro San Felipe, we were able to get nice clean-up views of this striking, blue-capped dwarf in the scrub forest above Teotitlán del Valle.

**HOUSE FINCH (COMMON)** (*Haemorhous mexicanus roseipectus*) – Very common.

**BLACK-HEADED SISKIN** (*Spinus notatus*) – One male parachuted in above us, singing, on Cerro San Felipe during our search for Dwarf Jays.

**LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – Fairly common and widespread, though mostly seen as wing-flashing flyovers.

#### Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in Oaxaca City. [I]

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## MAMMALS

**EASTERN COTTONTAIL** (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – These bunnies were along the roadside in middle elevation forest on a few occasions.

**MEXICAN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus aureogaster*) – Fairly common, especially in montane forests.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 179 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa**