

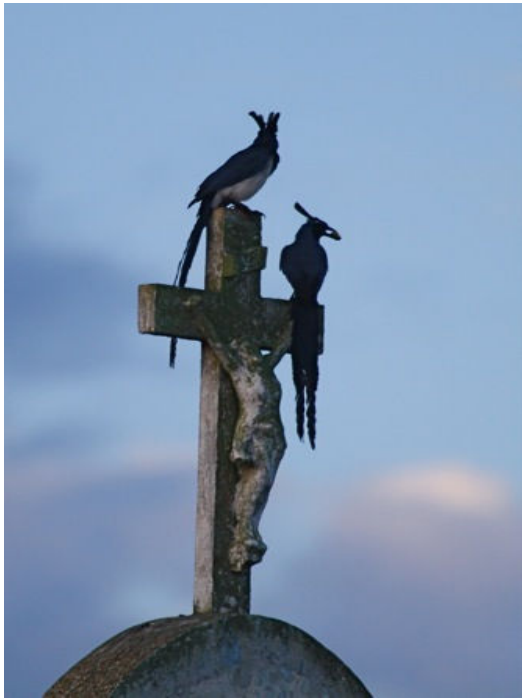
NORTHWEST MEXICO and SAN BLAS

From the Pacific to the Sierra Madre

24 January–3 February 2009

Tour leader: Michael Retter

photo at left: Black-throated Magpie-Jays near La Noria



In addition to some of the most breathtaking scenery Mexico has to offer, our San Blas and Northwest Mexico tour offers a chance to see over forty Mexican endemics, eleven of which are found in Northwest Mexico and nowhere else. Dry coastal thorn forest gives way to moist pine-oak woodland as we ascend the Sierra Madre Occidental. It is

here that we found one of the crown jewels of Mexican birds, the **Tufted Jay**, as well as a surprise observation of the near-mythical **Eared Quetzal**. At our hotel in the foothills, we enjoyed multiple observations of Military Macaw while enjoying late morning brunches. The tour concluded with a few relaxing days based in legendary San Blas, as we explored the nearby mangroves, lagoons, and lush tropical hillsides. Since everyone on the trip had birded in the U.S. extensively, we elected to concentrate on endemic birds, so consequently, we spent very little time looking at shorebirds, gulls, and ducks.

Day 1: Arrival in Mazatlán

As luck would have it, everyone had arrived by midday, so we decided to do some late afternoon birding in nearby thornforest. A flyover **Crane Hawk** definitely won as bird of the day. Ruddy Ground-Doves were ubiquitous, as dozens flushed ahead of us. Thick-billed Kingbirds would be a common roadside bird over the rest of the tour, so it was good to reacquaint ourselves with them now. A pair of Curve-billed Thrashers chased one another down the dusty road. Some of the more interesting passerines we found among the mixed flocks included **Lucy's Warbler**, Bell's Vireo, and the only Green-tailed Towhees and Pyrrhuloxias of the tour. The ubiquitous, high-pitched **Sinaloa Crow** provided the first tick in the regional endemic column.

Day 2: La Noria to Copala

We returned to the thornforest along the La Noria road this morning, where we quickly became acquainted with some of that habitat's more common birds. Gila Woodpeckers cackled from nearly every cactus stand, and **Black-throated Magpie-Jays** seemed to be screaming at us as we rounded each corner. No matter how many times I see this curly-crested, streamer-tailed, high-personality bird, it never fails to impress. After combing through many Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, we did manage to find a couple **Black-capped Gnatcatchers**, no small feat when in winter plumage! A flock of **Rufous-bellied Chachalacas** visited a feedlot, offering splendid views as they gorged themselves on seed and then ascended into a tree to digest. While we enjoyed the chachalacas, a family of **Purplish-backed Jays** stopped by to voice their disapproval of our presence. **Long-billed Starthroat** and Broad-billed and **Cinnamon Hummingbirds** fed on roadside flowers, and a quick bout of whistling brought a **Nutting's Flycatcher**, a **Sinaloa Wren**, and a real Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl in to investigate.

As we were getting ready to leave the area for lunch, we spotted a covey of **Elegant Quail** making its way through an open field. We paused to watch as they proceeded in the open and towards us, allowing great studies of their intricate plumage and crazy crests. An Antelope Jackrabbit appeared in the same field. Finally, on our drive out of the area, a flock of the world's largest swift, the endemic **White-naped Swift**, appeared over the highway—definitely worth a stop!





Plain-capped Starthroat



adult Purplish-backed Jay



male Elegant Quail



Rufous-bellied Chachalacas



dozen rainbow-colored birds as they winged their way across the dry foothills in the distance—and directly towards us! Eventually they passed nearly overhead, and with the setting sun to our backs, we were even able to discern the eye color of these magnificent and powerful birds. After that experience, it was time for dinner.

Fortuitously, we stopped on our way up into the foothills in a gallery woodland along the lower reaches of the Durango Highway. A flock of Godman's [Scrub] Euphonias were perched right over the car. We quietly entered the forest on a wide, flat, trail, and with only a dozen steps or so, it became evident that we'd stumbled into the middle of an understory flock, headlined by a very cooperative and flamboyant **Fan-tailed Warbler**. Still photos just can't do this tail-flaring species justice; the whole back half of the bird seems as if it will dislocate any moment! Other interesting birds in the flock included Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Rufous-backed Robin, Sinaloa Wren, "Western" Blue Bunting, and a stunning male **Black-capped Vireo**.

After checking into our hotel and enjoying its famous coconut pie, it was time to do some foothills birding. Streak-backed Orioles were all over the place, feeding in the introduced bottlebrush, which thankfully for us, was in full bloom. Before long, the raucous calls of **Military Macaws** could be heard echoing through the valleys below, but where were they? A minute or more later, we finally caught sight of a



Military Macaws



Black-capped Vireo

Day 3: Upper Durango Highway

Our first (somewhat chilly) stop this morning was on a side road into some nice pine forest, where Eared Quetzal had been reported in the not-too-distant past. Right out of the car, an **Arizona Woodpecker** appeared on a pine overhead. A male Eastern Bluebird sang from a small snag, and a **Black-headed Siskin** fed on some seeding flowerheads just off the road. We were now high enough for White-eared Hummingbirds, and they were common the rest of the day at and above this elevation. Having dipped on the quetzal here, we tried at another known spot. The birds were really hopping here, and we spent a good hour and a half coming through a massive mixed flock, the core of which seemed to be a large group of the endemic (and handsome) **White-striped Woodcreeper**. While the dozen or so woodcreepers fed at mid-levels with Hepatic Tanagers and **Mexican Chickadees**, the treetops were full of smaller birds. Warblers included **Red-faced**, Audubon's, Grace's, Hermit, Townsend's, Nashville, **Crescent-chested**, Black-and-white, and some with more exotic names like Painted and Slate-throated Whitestarts. Hutton's and Cassin's Vireos were also present, as was the odd but lovely **Olive Warbler**, which is neither olive-colored nor a warbler!



White-striped Woodcreeper



Olive Warbler

By late morning, we'd reached our main stop of the day, Barranca Rancho Liebre, known to most of the birding world as "the Tufted Jay spot". The gully next to the parking spot is often home to a pair of **Red-headed Tanagers**, and today was no exception. A male Blue-throated Hummingbird patrolled the flowerbanks. A short hike above the highway yielded a small family of **Tufted Jays** with very little effort. The way the expressive crest flops around and contracts and compresses as a bird moves its head is quite remarkable. From the velvet blue upperparts to the penetrating yellow eyes and snow white tail band, this is a species that truly must be experienced in person! We then continued up the trail toward the edge of the canyon (barranca), but I stopped dead in my tracks when I heard a loud, piercing wheeeee-chuck echo through the ravine. It was an **Eared Quetzal** for sure, but where was it?! A male **Mountain Trogon** appeared and had our hearts racing, but back to the search! A couple minutes later, the bird cackled as it flew up the creek and out of sight. We quickly followed and before long, found ourselves marveling at this bird (and its namesake "ears") through the scope at point blank range for a good 45 minutes. Just finding one is hard enough, but getting views of its namesake ears is something that even many of the most dedicated Mexico birders never experience!



Tufted Jay



Red-headed Tanager



subadult male Eared Quetzal



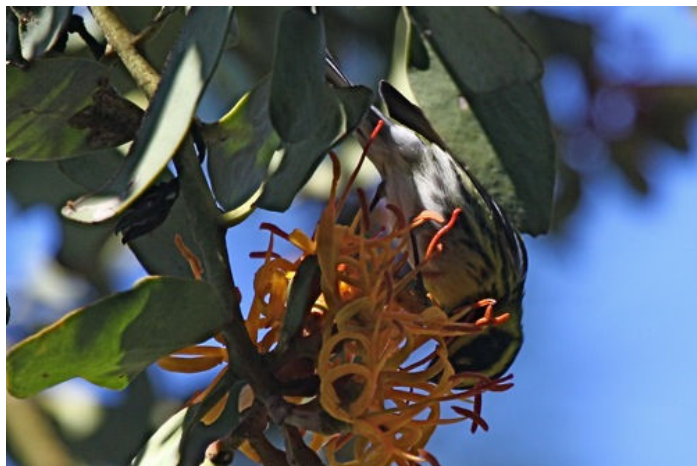
same bird, with "ears" visible

We left the quetzal in peace and continued up the creek, stopping at a dark, wet seep where some pseudo-cloud forest vegetation exists. We could hear something on the ground, but had little more than glimpses of a glowing white throat. A little playblack, though, produced full-body views of a pair of **Green-striped Brush-finches**. Meanwhile, a flash of yellow off to the side came into focus as a sprightly **Golden-browed Warbler**. We took a break to eat a picnic lunch near the old orchard just below the south rim of the canyon and were rewarded with our first sighting of the local and endemic "**Gray-eared**" **Red Warbler**. Once at the lip of the canyon, we positioned ourselves on a comfortable rock, offering breathtaking views of the canyon below any a good chance to see any distant flocks of Thick-billed Parrots. We also made sure we could see the superfluous clumps of fruit hanging from the nearby trees, just in case an Aztec Thrush decided to stop by. It seems we'd used up our luck on the quetzal, but we did enjoy having very close views of Hepatic Tanager, **Gray Silky**, and Townsend's Warbler as they fed on fruit and/or nectar in the brightly colored epiphytes. All the while, we were serenaded by the other-worldly songs of countersinging **Brown-backed Solitaires**. Too cool! Both American and **White-throated Robins** appeared on our hike back down.

On the way back to Copala, we had dinner at a good German restaurant in Capilla de Taxte, where a flock of ~300 White-naped Swifts circled and screamed overhead in the waning light of the evening.



Golden-browed Warbler



"Gray-eared" Red Warbler



Townsend's Warbler

White-throated Robin

Day 4: Durango Highway

We decided to take advantage of the early morning cool in the lower elevations today and started along the Pánuco Road. Unfortunately, it was relatively quite this morning. That said, we were interrupted by groups of squawking **Military Macaws** and **Orange-fronted Parakeets** on a regular basis all morning. We had our first views of the handsome and endemic **Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow** here.

We enjoyed brunch on the hotel restaurant terrace, which overlooks a large valley full of flowering and fruiting trees. Orange-fronted Parakeets, **Yellow-winged Caciques**, Masked Tityras, and **Black-throated Magpie-Jays** were in view nearly all the time. A pair of **Military Macaws** flew over the valley and over the open-air restaurant and a Canyon Wren sang from below.

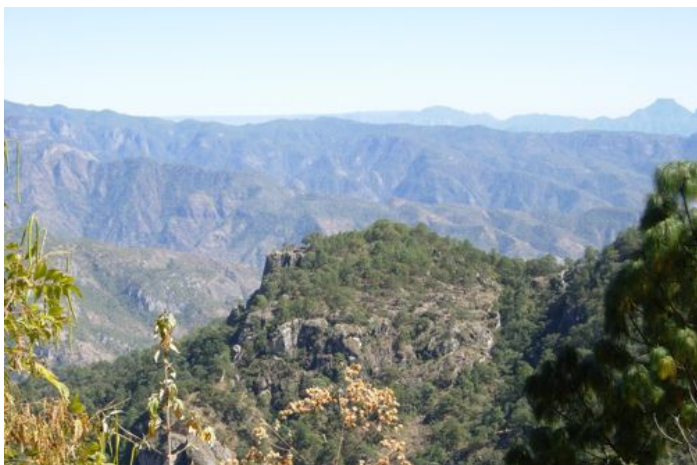
With the heat of the day, we ascended higher into the mountains. Though we didn't find any more Tufted Jays, a small group of Steller's Jays passed by the highway. We stopped at a small park overlooking a wide canyon, where blooming epiphytes attracted a small flock of Scott's Orioles. A pair of Common Ravens played overhead.

Nearby, we decided to explore a small side road, where we quickly detected a very vocal flock of **Evening Grosbeaks**. Most of our time here was spent sifting through a large mixed flock. New species found here included Bridled Titmouse, Magnificent Hummingbird, "Brown-throated" Wren, and Golden-crowned Warbler.

Finally, we found a leaky hose along the Petaca Road, which provided enough water that the hillside below it was covered with flowers and the seedheads of flowers past. **Black-vented**, Hooded, and **Streak-backed Orioles**, **Black-headed Siskins**, Lesser Goldfinches, **Yellow Grosbeaks**, and Rufous, Berylline, and Calliope Hummingbirds seemed to glow in the golden rays of the late afternoon sun.



Bridled Titmouse



typical view from the Durango Highway



Black-headed Siskin



Black-vented Oriole

Day 5: Lower Durango Highway and San Blas

Yesterday's trip to the Pánuco Road was slow, but it did turn up an immense stand of bottlebrush later in the day. We returned to that location at dawn, which was a great decision. We immediately found a family of **Grayish Saltators** feeding on (whole) flowers and young leaves; it included some recently-fledged birds, which allowed us to compare the different field marks (like eyebrow color) of the two plumages. The flowers' nectar attracted a multitude of birds: Lazuli, Painted, and **Varied Buntings**, Black-headed and **Yellow Grosbeaks**, **Blue Mockingbirds**, Summer Tanagers, Streak-backed Orioles, Black-throated Gray Warblers, and Tropical Parulas, among others. After hearing them all over the lower elevations the last couple days, we finally had nice views of a pair of **Happy Wrens** in a roadside thicket. At one point when trying to lure in small passerines with some whistling, a real pygmy-owl replied—a **Colima Pygmy-Owl**, which came in very closely. A female **Golden-crowned Emerald** sat obligingly by the roadside, and with some patience we all managed views of the impressive, long-tailed male. And of course, the macaws wouldn't let us leave without doing a couple more spectacular flybys.

After checking out of the hotel, we headed back down the highway toward the coast, stopping again at the galley forest we hit on the way up. Today we marveled at a pair of **Pale-billed Woodpeckers** as they interacted with one another, fully erecting their ridiculous red crests. A pair of **Lineated Woodpeckers** was also simultaneously visible, allowing direct comparisons of these large, look-alike woodpeckers.



adult Grayish Saltator



juv. Grayish Saltator



male Varied Bunting



female Golden-crowned Emerald



Pale-billed Woodpeckers with crests flared



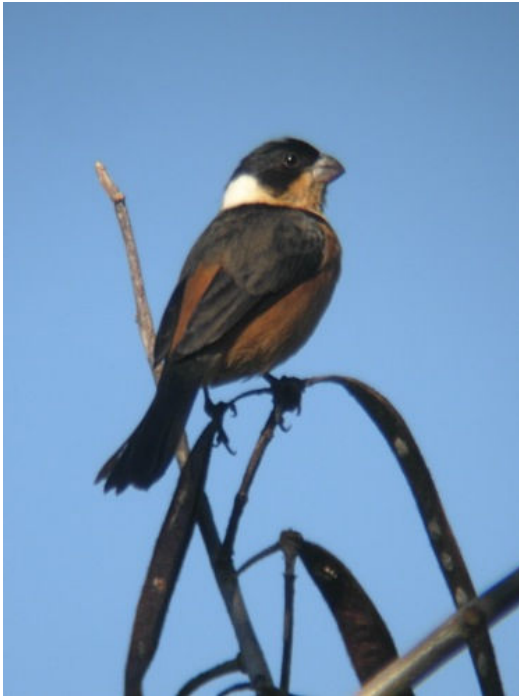
female Yellow Grosbeak

Multiple stops in lowland thornforest failed to produce the notoriously difficult Flammulated Flycatcher, but we did find a huge ctenosaur (iguana) lounging in the middle of a large pipe cactus.

We the drove on south toward San Blas, noting Chihuahuan Ravens, Short-tailed Hawks, Great Black-Hawks, White-tailed Kites, Zone-tailed Hawks, and Crane Hawks along the way. Stopping at the ponds just outside of San Blas added dozens of new birds to the trip list. Highlights included Whimbrel, Roseate Spoonbill, and Wood Stork.

Day 6: San Blas (Singayta, sewage ponds, La Tovar)

We started in the moist lowlands this morning, walking along the road through Singayta. We scoured the swampy areas for empids, White-throated Flycatcher in particular, but we only turned up Least and "Western" Flycatchers. A "**Mexican**" **Squirrel Cuckoo** appeared, showing off its rufous-below tail and giving a call that seemed odd to those familiar with the more widespread subspecies. A comical **Golden-cheeked Woodpecker** fed on a hanging vine nearly within arms reach, and both **Fan-tailed Warblers** and Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrushes bounced around along the shaded rocks littering the jungle floor. Blue-black Grassquits and **Cinnamon-rumped Seedeaters** fed in the grass along the edge of the cattle pastures, and we remarked how this rusty, plain-winged bird, sometimes considered the nominate race of White-collared Seedeater, looks nothing at all like the others.



Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater



Golden-cheeked Woodpecker

A midday trip to the now neutrally-scented sewage ponds yielded close-up views at a number of sought-after species, like **Northern Jaçana**, Cinnamon Teal, and Least Grebe.

After a short siesta, we met our boat captain for a pleasant trip into the mangroves. **Mangrove Swallows** were evident right away as they passed a few feet overhead. We first went to a small freshwater inlet where the captain had recently seen Rufous-necked Wood-Rails. We didn't find any wood-rails, but we did have amazing views of Rufous-backed Robin, Yellow-winged Cacique, Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Wilson's, Nashville, Black-and-white, and "Mangrove" Warblers as they came in to bathe and drink.

In transit to the next location, we saw Osprey, Semipalmated Plover, Tricolored Heron, and Snowy Egret. We made a few more stops for the wood-rail, but still, no luck. Green Kingfishers hunted from perched just above the above. A Common Black-Hawk perched in a dead snag as he eyed the tangled roots below for frogs. Aningas snaked through the water, sometimes little more than a bill visible to us air-breathers. As the sun's rays slanted, both Black- and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons began to appear, not long followed by **Bare-throated Tiger-Herons** and **Boat-billed Herons**. Right at sunset, we tried one last time for **Rufous-necked Wood-Rail**; we managed to pull a calling bird in very close, but it refused to come into the open. Around the corner, a great surprise: a singing Bare-throated Tiger-Heron in the top of a dead tree! A **Bat Falcon** blasted overhead at top speed, unfortunately ensuring that not everyone managed to see it. Soon it was quickly getting dark (this is the tropics, after all), and the captain's powerful spotlight trained on some **Limpkins**, just coming out to feed. By now, Pauraques and fishing bats were feeding over the water. When fully dark, we started back to the dock, and the most anticipated part of the boat ride was realized for many. **Northern Potoos** were now out on their feeding perches, and we enjoyed spectacular views of a good dozen seemingly giant birds—a great way to end the day.



Bare-throated Tiger-Heron



singing tiger-heron



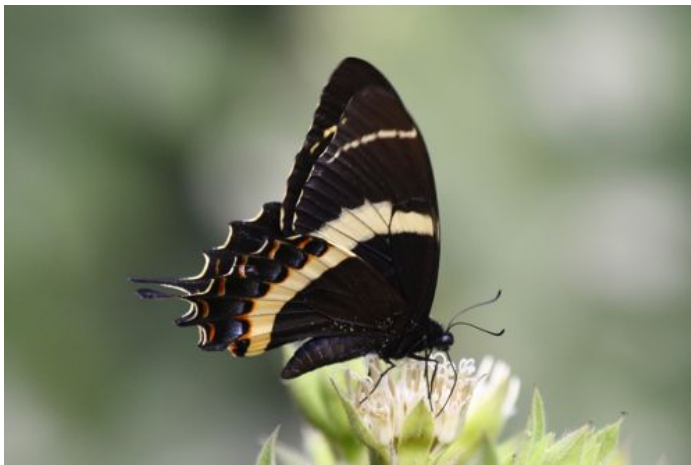
Northern Potoo



Northern Potoo

Day 7: Cerro San Juan

Just about an hour south of San Blas is Cerro San Juan, an old volcanic massif with just enough elevation that it's the northernmost outpost in western Mexico for number of species. Hummingbirds seemed to be the first birds active today, fighting one another for the best spots among the roadside flowerbanks. As is often the case, one or two feisty Rufous Hummingbirds tried to chase off all the others: Costa's, Broad-billed, Berylline, White-eared, and the diminutive **Bumblebee**. The sun warmed the tops of the trees, and birds appeared on cue to eat the "resurrected" insects. A **Golden Vireo** was the first to appear, though we were tipped off to its location by the bird's song. Warblers dominated the treetops: Townsend's, Grace's, **Red-faced**, **Crescent-chested**, and Black-throated Gray, to name just a few. **Gray-crowned Woodpeckers** "sang" from across the valley, but they were too far away to be interested in my iPod. **Elegant Euphonias** did the same. We stopped at a small clearing to look for more hummingbirds and were pleased to find a pair of cooperative Rufous-capped Warbler.



By mid-morning we were at the summit of the road, and coming up on Rancho La Noria. I had a hot tip that there was a Spotted Wren nest next to the entrance gate, but they seemed to have abandoned the site. Bummer. There was a very entertaining pair of Acorn Woodpeckers, though. We descended onto the southeast side of the mountain and immediately noticed a change in habitat. The valleys were now lush and dark—just what we needed if we were to find our main target for the day. One of the gullies was particularly packed with flowers, so we positioned ourselves there, and within a minute or two, a male **Mexican Woodnymph** appeared out of nowhere, hovering just in front of us! We found his preferred perched and enjoyed great views of him, a glittering vision of purple, steel blue, and lime, for the next half hour or so. Upslope, we heard some very odd calls, nothing any of us had ever heard before. They turned out to be coming from a very shy troop of Green Jays. We all agreed that between their odd behavior and strange vocalizations, there was something interesting about this population of birds. Much of midday and the early afternoon was spent trolling for Spotted Wren, but no

luck. Some cute little Tufted Flycatchers kept us company, though, and we found quite a few Magnificent Swallowtails, an impressive endemic butterfly species.

On the way back to San Blas, we stopped to walk an abandoned road through the thornforest. Here we had great views of Masked Tityras and Black-throated Magpie-Jays as they fed in a fruiting tree at eye level. Sinaloa and Happy Wrens hopped around in the understory, offering both visual and aural comparisons of this potentially confusing pair.



Golden Vireo



Grace's Warbler



Mexican Woodnymph



female Masked Tityra

Day 8: San Blas (Tecuitata and La Bajada)

We planned to bird the humid, low-elevation foothills today, so we were up before first light in order to beat the hot midday sun. A Mottled Owl sang from a large tree in the hotel's parking lot—a good sign. Recent bulldozer work at Tecuitata meant that we had to hike in the last kilometer or so, but this proved fortuitous, as a Bright-rumped Attila had set up territory in the mango plantation along the way. At the edge of the shade coffee plantation, a fruiting tree just downslope attracted **Citreoline Trogons**, Rose-throated Becards, and White-throated Robins. **Gray-crowned Woodpeckers** again called off in the distance but were too far away to respond to playback. We heard scratching on the ground just off the road, so we quietly walked in under the coffee bushes to see what was there. Most of the noise was made by a small group of **Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrows** as they tossed leaves aside, towhee-like. A **Red-breasted Chat** passed by quickly, but all had seen this bird in the past, so we didn't concentrate on refinding it. On the walk back to the car, a **Russet-crowned Motmot** dashed across the road and, thankfully, up into a sparsely-leaved Cecropia tree. Below, another group of ground-sparrows appeared, but this time in the open after some pygmy-owl imitation. Soon, a real **Colima Pygmy-Owl** responded and flew in to check us out. While driving back to the hotel for lunch and a siesta we noticed that the foothills just south of San Blas were shrouded in clouds, which made clear our afternoon birding decision: we would head up into the clouds and bird at La Bajada, another shade-grown coffee plantation.



But first, a large congregation of water birds at a freshwater inlet along the beach drew our attention. There we had amazing views of Heermann's Gulls and Royal and Gull-billed Terns bathing in and drinking the fresh water.

As we suspected, the cloudy conditions made for excellent birding. La Bajada's famous fig tree was with crawling with birds, mostly **Citreoline Trogons** and **Rufous-backed** and **White-throated Robins**. We watched the tree for quite awhile but were eventually distracted by a loud crash from within a group of banana trees. We walked over to investigate, and it turned out to be a rather surly Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, none too pleased with our appearance there. In the nearby rocky tangles, we found multiple **Fan-tailed Warblers**. Amazons started calling all around us, and eventually we realized they were perched, but we just couldn't locate them. Eventually, John spotted one on a bare branch, and we were soon enjoying full-frame scope views of a pair of **Lilac-crowned Parrots**—seeing

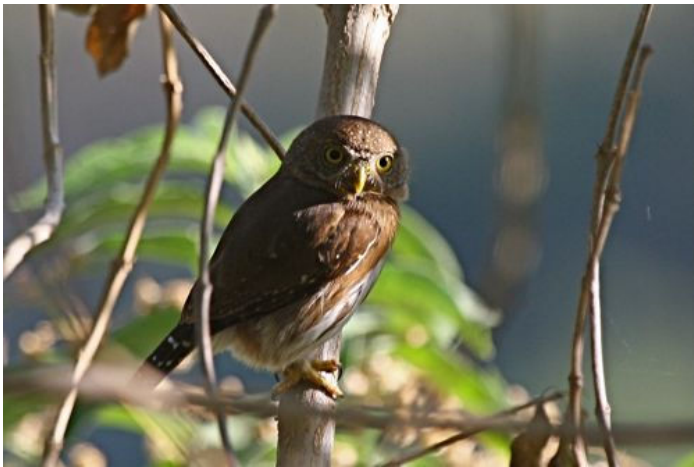
them in flight is hard enough, but to have such amazing looks of perched birds was remarkable! A flock of **Mexican Parrotlets** kept flying up and down the valley, but they wouldn't stop for us. On the way back down to the coast, we found another Bright-rumped Atilla.



male Citreoline Trogon chowing down



Russet-crowned Motmot



Colima Pygmy-Owl



Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow

Day 9: San Blas (La Bajada and Singayta)

Impressed with the activity at La Bajada the day before, we decided to spend the morning there today. And what a good decision it proved to be. Crested Guans were calling as we stepped out of the car at the fig tree, where a group of **Rufous-bellied Chachalacas** was gorging itself on ripe figs. From the thicket next to the car we heard the chattering of a **Red-crowned Ant-Tanager**, and soon enough they passed across the road affording nice views. A Greenish Elaenia and a Plumbeous Vireo fed just overhead. Up the road, a stunning male "Coppery-tailed" Elegant Trogon appeared and paused in the scope for us. A **Gray-crowned Woodpecker** again called from across the valley, but this one flew right in to the recording...at last, a look at this West Mexican endemic! The parrotlets frustrated us again, always flying by fast, overhead and backlit. Equally frustrating were the half a dozen **Ruddy Quail-Doves** we'd flushed off the road; they always saw us before we saw them. Further up the hill, we went to my **Rosy Thrush-Tanager** spot, and although one did call in response to playback, it wouldn't show itself. A Lesser Ground-Cuckoo sang from a distant, dry hilltop.

We took a side trail up into a dense planting of banana, when I heard a strange but familiar sound. A **Flammulated Flycatcher** was calling up ahead, but here?! As it turned out, the top of the hill was much drier and supported a nice stand of thornforest. With persistence, we all were able to note the flycatcher's field marks, from its odd bill and pale spectacles to the cinnamon-edged wings and ever-so-slightly-streaked breast. A **Colima Pygmy-Owl** flew in to see what all the whistling was about. Just then, Nancy saw a large something move out of the corner of her eye—it was a juvenile **San Blas Jay** feeding on a banana! We watched a family of jays as it quietly moved through the area, munching ripe bananas along the way. All the while, the pygmy-owl hadn't stopped singing, and it attracted the attention of a **Golden-crowned Emerald** and an irate **Mexican Hermit**. The hermit would only dash through quickly, never pausing for a decent look. Back at the car, some airborne whistling alerted us to the presence of a singing **Black Hawk-Eagle**, here at the new western extent of its range.



San Blas Jay



Flammulated Flycatcher

We birded a side road in the marshy lowlands just before lunch, but the sun really kept the bird activity low. White-throated Flycatchers again alluded us, but we managed to find a **Ruddy-breasted Seedeater**, some Willow Flycatchers, and a tree full of seemingly invisible parrotlets. We spent over half an hour trying to find them, but lunch (and air conditioning) were calling.

White-throated Flycatcher, Mexican Parrotlet, and Collared Forest-Falcon were the main targets this evening, so we opted to return to Singayta. Again, the only empids we found were “Westerns” and Least. Parrotlets were not even heard, though we did enjoy prolonged studies of Orange-fronted Parakeet and Lineated Woodpecker. Black-chinned Hummingbird was new for the trip. A **Great Black-Hawk** flew over, and as the temperature started to drop towards evening, a **Collared Forest-Falcon** began to call. Try as we might, the best we could do was to get some prolonged flight views of the falcon. Back at the entrance we found a flock of handsome **Stripe-headed Sparrows**. By now we were exhausted—time for dinner and bed. Over dinner we ran into some other birders who told us we’d missed a triple-digit flock of Thick-billed Parrots by only a day at the Barranca, but they missed the quetzal. Still, with our great luck with San Blas Jay today (which is rare this far north, contrary to its name), we felt pretty lucky.



Day 10: San Blas (La Bajada) to Mazatlán

Over dinner the previous night we had a discussion regarding the next day’s birding plans. Did we want to go back out on the boat to look for wood-rails or back to La Bajada? The decision was unanimous, so we returned to La Bajada. Our luck improved markedly today with the **Ruddy Quail-Doves**, as we had multiple scope views of them both walking the road ahead of us and perched off to the side. The **Lilac-crowned Parrots** were in the same place, and thankfully, so were the (now perched) **Mexican Parrotlets!** Even through the scope, it’s amazing how much these little guys look like leaves when they’re not moving, but then again, that’s the idea!



We walked back up into the banana plantation to try for a better view of the hermit, and although he was still there, singing away, we never managed to see him perched. The San Blas Jays, Flammulated Flycatcher, and Colima Pygmy-Owl were all still there as well. The **Rosy Thrush-Tanager** continued to taunt us, calling just often enough to keep us interested but never singing and never coming out

to where we could see it. Back at the car, we found a female **Flame-colored Tanager** and a **Russet-crowned Motmot**. Unfortunately, we had to get going if we were to make it to Mazatlán with time to scope out the coast.

After checking into the hotel and before dinner, we stopped at the Booby Rocks in Mazatlán, where we found bucketloads of Blue-footed Boobies coming in to roost. On the nearby waterfront, we found a group of gulls and terns that included Elegant Tern and Bonaparte’s Gull.

A delicious meal of authentic tacos al pastor, tamales, and horchata was the perfect end to an exciting tour, but we all were wishing we had just a couple more days...



female Ruddy Quail-Dove



female Flame-colored Tanager

BIRD LIST

This list includes all the bird species that were recorded by at least one of us. Taxonomy and nomenclature closely follow Howell's *Checklist of the Birds of Mexico* and all subsequent AOU supplements. Quotation marks denote a possible future split. For instance, "Eastern" Blue Bunting means that the eastern form may one day be split from Blue Bunting. Brackets denote the larger taxon that a species has been split from. For instance, Galápagos [Audubon's] Shearwater means that Galápagos Shearwater was once considered a subspecies of Audubon's Shearwater (and may still be by some authorities). Parentheses denote an alternate name used by some checklists.

Totals:

274 bird species recorded
8 heard only

Abbreviations:

h = heard only
^ = endemic to northern Middle America
* = endemic to Mexico

(NW) = endemic to Northwestern Mexico

(W) = endemic to the Pacific (western) slope of northern Middle America

WATERFOWL: Anatidae

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>
Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>

CRACIDS: Cracidae

Rufous-bellied Chachalaca* (NW)	<i>Ortalis wagleri</i>
h Crested Guan	<i>Penelope purpurascens</i>

NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae

Elegant Quail* (NW)	<i>Callipepla douglasii</i>
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GREBES: Podicipedidae

Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>
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GANNETS and BOOBIES: Sulidae

Blue-footed Booby	<i>Sula nebouxii</i>
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PELICANS: Pelecanidae

American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>
Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
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DARTERS: Anhingidae

Anhinga	<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>
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FRIGATEBIRDS: Fregatidae

Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>
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HERONS: Ardeidae

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron	<i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>

Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>
Boat-billed Heron	<i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i>
<u>IBISES and SPOONBILLS: Threskiornithidae</u>	
White Ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>
Roseate Spoonbill	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>
<u>STORKS: Ciconiidae</u>	
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>
<u>NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae</u>	
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
<u>TYPICAL RAPTORS: Acciptridae</u>	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
Crane Hawk	<i>Geranospiza caerulescens</i>
Common Black-Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>
Great Black-Hawk	<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>
Harris's Hawk	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>
Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo nitidus</i>
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Black Hawk-Eagle	<i>Spizaetus tyrannus</i>
<u>FALCONS and CARACARAS: Falconidae</u>	
Collared Forest-Falcon	<i>Micrastur semitorquatus</i>
Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>
Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpethotes cachinnans</i>
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Bat Falcon	<i>Falco rufigularis</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
<u>RAILS, GALLINULES, and COOTS: Rallidae</u>	
h Rufous-necked Wood-Rail	<i>Aramides axillaris</i>
h Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>
<u>LIMPKIN: Aramidae</u>	
Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>
<u>PLOVERS: Charadriidae</u>	
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
<u>STILTS and AVOCETS: Recurvirostridae</u>	
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>
<u>JACANAS: Jacanidae</u>	
Northern Jacana	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>
<u>SANDPIPERS: Scolopacidae</u>	
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
"Western" Willet	<i>Tringa s. inornata</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
<u>GULLS: Larinae</u>	
Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Larus philadelphia</i>
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>
Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>
Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
<u>TERNs: Sterninae</u>	
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>
Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>
Elegant Tern	<i>Thalasseus elegans</i>
<u>PIGEONS and DOVES: Columbidae</u>	
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Red-billed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas flavirostris</i>
h Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>
Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>
Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>

White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
Ruddy Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon montana</i>
<u>PARROTS: Psittacidae</u>	
Orange-fronted Parakeet (W)	<i>Aratinga canicularis</i>
Military Macaw	<i>Ara militaris</i>
Mexican Parrotlet* (W)	<i>Forpus cyanopygius</i>
Liac-crowned Parrot* (W)	<i>Amazona finschi</i>
<u>CUCKOOS: Cuculidae</u>	
"Mexican" Squirrel Cuckoo* (W)	<i>Piaya cayana mexicana</i>
h Lesser Ground-Cuckoo (W)	<i>Morococcyx erythropygus</i>
Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>
<u>OWLS: Strigiformes</u>	
Colima Pygmy-Owl* (W)	<i>Glaucidium palmarum</i>
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium brasilianum</i>
h Mottled Owl	<i>Ciccaba virgata</i>
<u>NIGHTJARS and NIGHTHAWKS: Caprimulgidae</u>	
Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>
Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>
<u>POTOOS: Nyctibiidae</u>	
Northern Potoo	<i>Nyctibius jamaicensis</i>
<u>SWIFTS: Apodidae</u>	
White-naped Swift* (NW)	<i>Streptoprocne semicollaris</i>
Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>
<u>HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae</u>	
Mexican [Long-billed] Hermit* (W)	<i>Phaethornis [longirostris] mexi</i>
Golden-crowned Emerald* (W)	<i>Chlorostilbon auriceps</i>
Broad-billed Hummingbird	<i>Cyanthus latirostris</i>
Mexican Woodnymph* (W)	<i>Thalurania ridgwayi</i>
White-eared Hummingbird^	<i>Hylocharis leucotis</i>
Berylline Hummingbird^	<i>Amazilia beryllina</i>
Cinnamon Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia rutila</i>
Blue-throated Hummingbird	<i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>
Magnificent Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>
Plain-capped Starthroat	<i>Helioamaster constantii</i>
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>
Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>
Costa's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte costae</i>
Calliope Hummingbird	<i>Stellula calliope</i>
Bumblebee Hummingbird*	<i>Atthis heloisa</i>
Rufous Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>
<u>TROGONS and QUETZALS: Trogonidae</u>	
Citreoline Trogon* (W)	<i>Trogon citreolus</i>
Mountain Trogon^	<i>Trogon mexicanus</i>
"Coppery-tailed" Elegant Trogon	<i>Trogon elegans</i>
Eared Quetzal* (W)	<i>Euptilotis neoxenus</i>
<u>MOTMOTS: Momotidae</u>	
Russet-crowned Motmot^ (W)	<i>Momotus mexicanus</i>
<u>KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae</u>	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>
<u>WOODPECKERS: Picidae</u>	
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker* (W)	<i>Melanerpes chrysogenys</i>
Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>
Arizona Woodpecker	<i>Picoides arizonae</i>
Gray-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Colaptes auricularis</i>
Lineated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus lineatus</i>
Pale-billed Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus guatemalensis</i>
<u>FURNARIIDS (incl. WOODCREEPERS): Furnariidae</u>	
White-striped Woodcreeper*	<i>Lepidocolaptes leucogaster</i>
<u>TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: Tyrannidae</u>	
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>
Tufted Flycatcher	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>
Greater Pewee	<i>Contopus pertinax</i>
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>
"Western" Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis/occidental</i>
Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>
Bright-rumped Attila	<i>Attila spadiceus</i>
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>
Nutting's Flycatcher (W)	<i>Myiarchus nuttingi</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Flammulated Flycatcher* (W)	<i>Deltarhynchus flammulatus</i>
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarynchus pitangua</i>

Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
Thick-billed Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>
genera <u>INCERTAE SEDIS</u>	
Rose-throated Becard	<i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>
Masked Tityra	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>
<u>SHRIKES: Laniidae</u>	
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
<u>VIREOS: Vireonidae</u>	
Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>
Black-capped Vireo	<i>Vireo atricapilla</i>
Plumbeous Vireo	<i>Vireo plumbeus</i>
Cassin's Vireo	<i>Vireo cassinii</i>
Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>
Golden Vireo* (W)	<i>Vireo hypochryseus</i>
"Western" Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus swainsoni</i> group
<u>CORVIDS: Corvidae</u>	
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
Black-throated Magpie-Jay* (NW)	<i>Calocitta colliei</i>
Tufted Jay* (NW)	<i>Cyanocorax dickeyi</i>
Green Jay	<i>Cyanocorax [yncas] luxuosus</i>
San Blas Jay* (W)	<i>Cyanocorax sanblasianus</i>
Purplish-backed Jay* (NW)	<i>Cyanocorax beecheii</i>
Sinaloa Crow* (NW)	<i>Corvus sinaloae</i>
Chihuahuan Raven	<i>Corvus cryptoleucus</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
<u>SWALLOWS: Hirundinidae</u>	
Mangrove Swallow	<i>Tachycineta albilinea</i>
Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
<u>TITS: Paridae</u>	
Mexican Chickadee	<i>Poecile sclateri</i>
Bridled Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus wollweberi</i>
<u>CREPERS: Certhiidae</u>	
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>
<u>WRENS: Troglodytidae</u>	
h Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>
Sinaloa Wren* (W)	<i>Thryothorus sinaloa</i>
Happy Wren* (W)	<i>Thryothorus felix</i>
"Northern" House Wren	<i>Troglodytes a. aedon</i>
"Brown-throated" Wren	<i>Troglodytes a. brunneicollis</i>
<u>KINGLETS: Regulidae</u>	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
<u>GNATCATCHERS & GNATWRENS: Polioptilinae</u>	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
Black-capped Gnatcatcher*	<i>Polioptila nigriceps</i>
<u>THRUSHES: Turdidae</u>	
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>
Brown-backed Solitaire^	<i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>
Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
White-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus assimilis</i>
Rufous-backed Robin* (W)	<i>Turdus rufopalliatu</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
<u>MIMIDS: Mimidae</u>	
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>
Blue Mockingbird*	<i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>
<u>SILKY-FLYCATCHERS: Ptilonotidae</u>	
Gray Silky(-flycatcher)^	<i>Ptilonotus cinereus</i>
<u>OLIVE WARBLER: Peucedramidae</u>	
Olive Warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>
<u>NEW WORLD WARBLERS: Parulidae</u>	
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>
Nashville Warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>
Lucy's Warbler	<i>Vermivora luciae</i>
Crescent-chested Warbler^	<i>Parula superciliosa</i>
Tropical Parula	<i>Parula pitayumi</i>
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica p. aestivia</i> group
"Mangrove" Warbler	<i>Dendroica p. erithachorides</i> gr
"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica c. auduboni</i> group
Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>
Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>
Hermit Warbler	<i>Dendroica occidentalis</i>
Grace's Warbler	<i>Dendroica graciae</i>
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>

American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>
Red-faced Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>
"Gray-eared" Red Warbler* (NW)	<i>Ergaticus ruber melanauris</i>
Painted Whitestart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>
Slate-throated Whitestart	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>
Fan-tailed Warbler^	<i>Euthlypis lachrymosa</i>
Golden-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>
Rufous-capped Warbler*	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>
Golden-browed Warbler^	<i>Basileuterus belli</i>
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>
Red-breasted Chat* (W)	<i>Granatellus venustus</i>
<u>TANAGERS: Thraupidae</u>	
Rosy Thrush-Tanager	<i>Rhodinocichla rosea</i>
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager	<i>Habia rubica</i>
Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>
Flame-colored Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>
Red-headed Tanager* (W)	<i>Piranga erythrocephala</i>
<u>EMBERIZIDS: Emberizidae</u>	
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater* (W)	<i>Sporophila torqueola</i>
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater	<i>Sporophila minuta</i>
Green-striped Brush-Finch* (W)	<i>Arremon virenticeps</i>
Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow* (W)	<i>Melospiza kieneri</i>
Green-tailed Towhee	<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>
Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
Stripe-headed Sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficauda</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>
Yellow-eyed Junco	<i>Junco phaeonotus</i>
<u>CARDINALIDS: Cardinalidae</u>	
"Western" Grayish Saltator* (W)	<i>Saltator c. vigorsii</i> group
Pyrrhuloxia	<i>Cardinalis sinuatus</i>
Yellow Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus chrysopheplus</i>
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
"Western" Blue Bunting* (W)	<i>Cyanocompsa parellina indigo</i>
Blue Grosbeak	<i>Passerina caerulea</i>
Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Varied Bunting	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>
Painted Bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>
<u>ICTERIDS: Icteridae</u>	
Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Black-vented Oriole^	<i>Icterus wagleri</i>
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>
Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>
Streak-backed Oriole	<i>Icterus pustulatus</i>
Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>
Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>
Yellow-winged Cacique^ (W)	<i>Cacicus melanicterus</i>
<u>FINCHES: Fringillidae</u>	
Godman's [Scrub] Euphonia	<i>Euphonia [a.] godmani</i>
h Elegant [Blue-hooded] Euphonia^	<i>Euphonia elegantissima</i>
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Black-headed Siskin^	<i>Carduelis notata</i>
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>
<u>OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae</u>	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>