

CHAN CHICH NEW YEAR

**DECEMBER 28, 2010 –
JANUARY 3, 2011**

LEADER: BOB SUNDSTROM

COMPILED BY: BOB SUNDSTROM

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003
AUSTIN, TX 78746
WWW.VENTBIRD.COM**

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It is hard to imagine a more splendid nature holiday getaway than our Chan Chich New Year tour. A short half-hour flight from Belize City, Chan Chich offers the top-notch amenities of one of the premier jungle lodges in the world, combined with superb tropical birding on its vast private land holdings. This year's tour at Chan Chich will be fondly remembered by all.

Our first morning outing on the trails leading from the lodge grounds illustrates the richness of the Chan Chich experience. Fresh-baked muffins and freshly brewed coffee awaited us at the lodge—a proper start-up for a pre-breakfast bird walk. We asked Chan Chich naturalist guide Marvin to accompany us. The expert guides associated with the lodge know just where special birds have been seen in recent days. It was a cool morning for Belize, about 70 F, and conditions were perfect for lots of bird activity. Our first steps took us across the main plaza of the lodge and cabana area, past flocks of wild Ocellated Turkeys that make the Chan Chich grounds their home. Ocellated Turkeys, brilliantly iridescent with bare head and neck colored an unearthly shade of blue, have been extirpated by hunting from much of their original range in Central America. But the turkeys thrive at Chan Chich, where they are closely protected and a familiar sight on the mowed grass near the lodge. Another huge turkey-like bird, the Crested Guan, is also a frequent sight on the grounds.

Bird activity in a small fruiting tree caught our eye. A Bright-rumped Attila, a strange-looking member of the vast flycatcher tribe, hopped from branch to branch, showing off its golden-orange rump. The attila shared the tree with a pair of Masked Tityras, and alongside these tropical residents was a Great Crested Flycatcher, a temperate zone breeder wintering in the Tropics. Other familiar winter visitors—Gray Catbirds and Wood Thrushes—hopped nearby, as confiding here as they are shy and retiring on their northern nesting grounds. Early morning bird activity was brisk. A male Red-capped Manakin showed itself, a stunning contrast of scarlet and jet-black. A Plain Xenops hung upside down like a chickadee as it explored a tangle of vines, while an Olivaceous Woodcreeper worked a palm trunk. We were just getting started. Along a nearby trail we came upon a Blue-crowned Motmot, perched on a loop of vine as if sitting on a swing. Just a few minutes later, a Tody Motmot, the smallest of all the motmots, perched low over the trail ahead. A Black-throated Shrike-Tanager gave loud whistled calls, fulfilling its sentry duty as the leader of a mixed species flock. Walking back toward the lodge for breakfast, we stopped at a flowering African tulip tree to watch lovely Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers, sparkling Green Honeycreepers, and to put the scope on a perched hummingbird—a stunning Purple-crowned Fairy.

Breakfast was wonderful, as were all the meals at Chan Chich, with plenty to choose from, and always fresh tropical fruit, fresh baked goods, and fresh-squeezed juice. Our table, which we revisited throughout the tour for meals, sat outside on the veranda of the lodge, with a clear view to a water feature not ten feet away. During each meal we watched a steady stream of avian visitors to the shallow pools of water and the fruiting trees that overhung them. Brightly-colored euphonias of three species came to bathe and sip, and a male Red-capped Manakin was a regular in the fruiting trees, as were a Slaty-tailed Trogon, an Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-winged Tanagers, a

Yellow-breasted Chat, and Black-cowled Orioles. One morning, a troop of Collared Aracaris—toucans richly-hued in yellow and red—stopped by the same trees. Each day, a male White-collared Seedeater sang its sweetly musical song nearby.

After breakfast we continued a remarkable round of birding. Along the Back Plaza Trail, we watched a Mexican Antthrush—a rotund antbird with a short cocked tail—walk across the forest floor. Nearby, the chatter of ant-tanagers and the flutter of wings told us we were closing in on an ant swarm. A mass of army ants was crossing the forest floor and trail, attended closely by birds that specialize in foraging at ant swarms. The birds flew or hopped right among the ants, capturing insects and other small creatures that were flushed out of hiding by the thousands of ants on the move. There were a pair each of Tawny-winged Woodcreepers and Northern Barred Woodcreepers, birds not often seen away from ant swarms. The woodcreepers perched low, a foot or two off the ground, and flew in quickly to snap up insects. Both Red-crowned and Red-throated ant-tanagers were on hand too. I always feel lucky to come upon an ant swarm, and this day we came across two. Another swarm that afternoon had Ruddy Woodcreepers in attendance, as well as Gray-headed Tanagers, a brightly-colored species that is a true ant swarm specialist. With the help of ant swarms we saw all seven woodcreeper species found around Chan Chich, including the largest and rarest of the lot, the Strong-billed Woodcreeper.

Not long after passing the ant swarm we stopped below an immense tree. About halfway up the tree, on a large branch supporting a massive epiphyte, was the nest of an Ornate Hawk-Eagle. The nest was still under construction, and we hoped the builder might soon pay a visit. Luck was with us, and within a few minutes a huge Ornate Hawk-Eagle landed in an adjacent tree, close enough for magnificent views through binoculars and absolutely incredible views through the spotting scope. We got the back view, then a view with the head feathers held erect in a split crest, and then the front view of the raptor's purplish-brown barred underparts and massive yellow talons. If any bird could cap an already spectacular morning of birding at Chan Chich, this was it, one of the world's most sensational birds of prey. We had unexpectedly good luck with hawk-eagles on the tour. A Black Hawk-Eagle was frequenting a spot along Chan Chich Creek, and a Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle pair turned up at another site. In our first two days at Chan Chich we had seen all three of the New World's hawk-eagles.

Our daily activities included a welcome break after lunch, for a siesta or time to sit in the shade of one's private veranda and relax—while watching hummingbirds coming to the cabana's feeder. Several afternoons we strolled under the forest canopy along Chan Chich Creek, to make a vigil at favorite late afternoon bathing spots for birds. We watched a host of warblers come to splash in the shallows—Kentucky Warblers, Hooded Warblers, American Redstarts, and Worm-eating Warblers—as Louisiana and Northern waterthrushes patrolled the creek edge and Green Kingfishers whizzed by. Other bathers included a beautiful male Black-throated Shrike-Tanager, a shy Thrush-like Schiffornis, and a Purple-crowned Fairy.

Among the shyest forest birds around Chan Chich are the tinamous, more often heard than seen. We were fortunate to see Great Tinamous on several occasions, including one that walked down the road in front of us. Among the least shy of creatures around Chan Chich were the monkeys: howler monkeys roared and postured in the trees, while spider monkeys swung from branch to branch. A night drive yielded ten or more Common Potoos, with one of the spectacularly odd-looking birds perched so close it seemed we could reach out and touch it.

Chan Chich offers a wonderful way to ring in the New Year.

ITINERARY

- December 28, 2010:** The group assembled at Belize City airport, departing around 4 p.m. for Chan Chich. We were met at the Gallon Jug airstrip by Marvin, and birded a bit from the van before driving to Chan Chich Lodge, this the first of six nights here.
- December 29, 2010:** Group met at the lodge before breakfast for coffee and baked goods then, accompanied by Marvin, birded River Trail to the upper service area, then along the entrance road to King's Tomb Trail before returning to the lodge for breakfast. After breakfast, we walked the Back Plaza Trail to Sylvester Rd. to junction with River/Bajo Trails, then back to the lodge via the lower service area in time for lunch. After an afternoon break, we birded along the entrance road to the suspension bridge, and a short distance out the Logger's Trail, before returning to Chan Chich Lodge for dinner.
- December 30, 2010:** After an early breakfast buffet, we rode in the open truck to the Escarpment, birding from the truck enroute. We returned to Chan Chich Lodge for lunch and an afternoon break then walked the Sac Be Trail to Chan Chich Ck. to watch spots where birds, especially warblers, come to bathe in late afternoon. At 8 p.m., we departed in the open truck for a night drive along the entrance road and the roadways of Gallon Jug, returning at 10 p.m.
- December 31, 2010:** After breakfast, we met up with Gilberto to bird along King's Tomb and Logger's Trails, returning to the lodge for lunch. We then departed by van with Marvin at 1:30 p.m. to bird Laguna Seca and a bit around Gallon Jug. After dinner at Chan Chich Lodge, we turned in our bird sightings to the Christmas Count coordinator, Bruce Miller.
- January 1, 2011:** Another early breakfast buffet, then departed in the open truck with Luis past Gallon Jug to the back roads in the cocoa plantation, where we birded on foot. We returned for lunch and a break, then met again at 3 p.m. to walk Sylvester Rd. trail, the River Trail, and the Logger's Trail to the afternoon bird bathing spot.
- January 2, 2011:** Met before breakfast at just after 6 a.m. to find Strong-billed Woodcreeper pair on the lodge grounds before they dispersed for the day. Still before breakfast we met up with Marvin to bird along Sylvester Rd. trail. After breakfast, Gilberto joined us to bird Sylvester Rd. and River Trail up until lunchtime. During the afternoon, we had a visit to Chan Chich Ck. bathing spots and did some birding along the entrance road.
- January 3, 2011:** Group met at the lodge before breakfast for coffee and baked goods, then birded along Norman's Temple Trail, Back Plaza Trail and Temple Loop and King's Tomb Trails before breakfast back at the lodge. We departed Chan Chich Lodge after 11 a.m. for a noon flight from Gallon Jug to Belize City for afternoon departures to the U.S.

BIRD LIST

Unusual/very scarce/very lucky to see sightings in **bold**.

Rare for the Chan Chich area in ***bold italics***.

Bird names are those given by the American Ornithologists' Union, with current updates.

TINAMOUS:

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) – First sighting was of one along the road to the escarpment, which remained in view as it wandered ahead of the truck for a considerable distance. Seen again by members of the group along the Logger's Trail, Sylvester Rd. trail, and River Trail. Normally, this secretive birds is a very challenging to see.

CHACHALACAS, GUANS, & CURASSOWS:

Plain Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*) – best views of this slender, grouse-sized cracid were at the edge of the lower service area

Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) –excellent views of these large, black, red-throated guans as they perched in trees or walked on the ground near the rear of the plaza

Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) – we saw mostly males, huge black birds with curly feathered crowns and large, yellow-ornamented bills

TURKEYS:

Ocellated Turkey (*Meleagris ocellata*) – Magnificently colorful and iridescent, turkeys were a regular sight around the Chan Chich grounds and other open areas. We counted 89 on the Christmas Count day.

GREBES:

Least Grebe (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – one at Laguna Seca

ANHINGAS:

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) – a couple at Laguna Seca

BITTERN & HERONS:

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – Jonathan saw one just after we got off the plane at Gallon Jug, which proceeded to disappear from view after walking into a low wet spot in the pasture.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) – several the morning we drove to the escarpment

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – white first-year birds primarily

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – one scoped along the edge of Laguna Seca

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS:

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) – a flock flew over as we walked down Sylvester Rd.

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – One of the birds we drove to the escarpment overlook to see, there were several of these massive, mostly white vultures overhead just as we arrived. Also more distant sightings near Gallon Jug and over Chan Chich plaza.

EAGLES, HAWKS & ALLIES:

White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) – One soared over late morning near the suspension bridge, and Deirdre and Candi saw a pair later in the trip.

Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) – several of this immaculate, silvery gray hawks near Gallon Jug

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) – along roadsides and in the wooded edge near the lodge

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) – one light morph hung in the wind at the escarpment

Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle (*Spizastur melanoleucus*) – A very nice find at the escarpment, we were able to scope one as it hung almost motionless facing into the wind. Least prevalent of the hawk-eagle species near Chan Chich.

Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – an immature called repeatedly and sat in the tree tops not far from the suspension bridge

Ornate Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus ornatus*) – One of several highlights of our first morning on the trails with Chan Chich guide Marvin: an adult Ornate Hawk-Eagle flew in near its incipient nest and perched for extraordinary views. After several minutes showing its back and side, it turned to face us directly, showing off its reddish-brown barred breast and huge talons.

FALCONS:

Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – one called for quite a while, then flew close overhead before disappearing into the canopy

Collared Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) – heard near the back of the plaza

Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – a brief view just as we landed at Gallon Jug

***Aplomado Falcon* (*Falco femoralis*)** – A rare visitor to Chan Chich, we saw this handsome, slender falcon at close range near the Gallon Jug airstrip on the Christmas Count day (only the second time it had been recorded in 20 years of local Christmas Counts.)

RAILS & COOTS:

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*) – scoped at Laguna Seca

SUNGREBE:

Sungrebe (*Heliornis fulica*) – Candi spotted this obscure, unique waterbird at Laguna Seca

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)

JACANAS:

Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) – at Laguna Seca

PIGEONS & DOVES:

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia/domestica*)

Pale-vented Pigeon (*Columba cayennensis*) – a few in Sylvester Village

Short-billed Pigeon (*Columba nigrirostris*) – in the cocoa plantation, we had a good view of this slender, dark pigeon as it perched in the open in a cecropia

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Sylvester Village

Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) – Marvin spotted a calling female along the Sylvester Rd. trail in a densely-vined tree, which ultimately afforded nice scope views. A pair was seen briefly along the road to the escarpment, flying by the truck.

Gray-fronted Dove (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) – seen several times flying up from trails, flashing its narrow white tail-tip

Ruddy Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon montana*) – a shy forest pigeon, we had a few quick views along the trails

PARROTS AND ALLIES:

Olive-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) – a few flying over

Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pionopsitta haematotis*) – a flock of eight flew over the suspension bridge

White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*) – great scope views of this small parrot

Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) – flying over the suspension bridge area

Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) – loud calls gave their perches away near the plaza

CUCKOOS & ANIS:

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) – We saw this large, sleek, rusty brown cuckoo on most days of the tour, as it slinked through branches at the forest edge.

Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)

NIGHTJARS:

Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – near the airstrip on the night drive

POTOOS:

Northern Potoo (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*) – We saw ten of these strange looking nocturnal birds on the night drive, one close enough to see every detail in the spotlight.

SWIFTS:

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – flying high over the trail on the first morning

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) – the small swifts seen in flocks on several occasions

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*) – flying over the escarpment and other areas, showing either a long, narrow pointed tail or the tail opened in scissor fashion

HUMMINGBIRDS:

Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) – [formerly Western Long-tailed Hermit] – around the lodgements in particular, the large hummer with long, curved bill and long tail tipped in white Stripe throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) – formerly named Little Hermit, this hummer fit the billing with its very small size

White-bellied Emerald (*Amazilia candida*) – Deirdre and Candi saw one at their cabana feeder

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – the common hummer around the grounds

Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliothryx barroti*) – First scoped in a flowering tree, where its white belly and brilliant green back were evident, we also saw one bathing in Chan Chich Ck.

TROGONS:

Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) – the smaller trogon with yellow breast

Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) – A regular morning visitor to the fruiting shrubs near the dining veranda, we also saw this large, red-breasted trogon on the trail walks.

MOTMOTS:

Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) – The smallest and seemingly shyest of the motmots, Marvin pointed one out to us the first morning along the Upper Plaza trail.

Blue-crowned Motmot (*Motmotus momota*) – also seen the first morning, perched characteristically on the rung of hanging loop of vine

KINGFISHERS:

Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*) – the massive kingfisher at the suspension bridge

Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) – flying along Chan Chich Ck.

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) – A family group of three offered wonderful views and made a series of dives at the creek crossing in Sylvester Village. Also seen along Chan Chich Ck.

PUFFBIRDS:

White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – A highly unusual sighting near Chan Chich, we saw one perched atop a bare tree along the road to the escarpment.

White-whiskered Puffbird (*Malacoptila panamensis*) – This small, Rufous puffbird became a regular sight along the forest roadways, where it perched at eye-level where the forest met the open roadside.

JACAMARS:

Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) – Emerald green with narrow dagger of a bill, we scoped a rufous breasted female at the suspension bridge. Another pair at the Sylvester Village creek crossing.

TOUCANS AND ALLIES:

Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) – an irregular visitor to the area, we scoped one of these petite toucans as it perched in the canopy along Sylvester Rd. trail.

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – a flock of these yellow and red toucans visited the fruiting trees at the lodge one morning

Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – Normally a common bird around Chan Chich, these large toucans were scarce this winter around Chan Chich in the wake of Hurricane Richard's effects on the fruiting trees favored by the toucans. We heard one calling as we watched bathing warblers along Chan Chich Ck., but it had moved on by the time we reached the open area where it had been.

WOODPECKERS & ALLIES:

Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) – a regular sight, often in pairs, around the plaza grounds, especially at palms with ripe red fruit and on the African tulip tree flowers

Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – in the more open landscape around Sylvester Village and Gallon Jug

Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) – a tiny, dark brown woodpecker seen best late in the day along the Logger's Trail
Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Piculus rubiginosus*) – first seen in the trees near the lodge, this beautiful medium sized woodpecker had a golden green back
Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) – a trip favorite, we saw these large, brown, crested woodpeckers most days around flowers and fruit
Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – scoped one morning in a tree right next to the lodge
Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) – many good views of the largest woodpecker of the region, with all scarlet feathered head and light colored bill

OVENBIRDS:

Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) – hanging upside down in vines, like a rusty brown chickadee

WOODCREEPERS:

Tawny-winged Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla anabatina*) – A distinctively marked woodcreeper, with pale throat, whitish mustache, and contrasting wing, we were fortunate to see pairs several times at ant swarms.
Ruddy Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla homochroa*) – Another ant swarm attendee, this woodcreeper was bright rufous all over with a bushy forecrown and pale bill.
Olivaceous Woodcreeper (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – The tiny woodcreeper seen quite frequently, with olive gray head and breast contrasting with rufous body.
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) – the other tiny woodcreeper
Strong-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*) – A morning vigil at the rear of the plaza yielded a pair of the area's largest and least common woodcreepers, as they called loudly just after sunrise. Cindy saw one around the lodge grounds later in the day.
Northern Barred Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae*) – The large, straight-billed woodcreeper with barred plumage, seen at three different ant swarms.
Ivory-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*) – Amazing view of one creeping under a dead, folded palm frond to extract a large insect, and seen again at 11:11 a.m. on 1/1/11.

TYPICAL ANT BIRDS:

Dot-winged Antbird (*Microrhopias quixensis*) – a pair in the tangles along the Logger's Trail

ANTTHRUSHES & ANTPITTAS:

Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) – A shy bird that walks slowly across the forest floor, Marvin pointed one out the first morning along the Back Plaza Trail.

FLYCATCHERS & ALLIES:

Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet (*Ornithion semiflavum*) – the tiny flycatcher was seen best our first day on the trails, and heard on several days
Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – although nondescript, we saw it well in the cocoa area
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – “fruitcatching” daily alongside our dining area
Sepia-capped Flycatcher (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*) – another flycatcher seen well in the cocoa plantation
Northern Bentbill (*Oncostoma cinereigulare*) – heard repeatedly, seen very briefly
Eye-ringed Flatbill (*Rhynchocyclus brevirostris*) – not so different looking from the next bird
Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*)
Stub-tailed Spadebill (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*) – seen in glimpses on several days, as they tiny birds foraged among dense, hanging vines and leaf bundles
Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher (*Myiobius sulphureipygius*) – the most eye-catching flycatcher of the trip, and easily seen for a forest understory denizen
Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*)
Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) – good comparison, showing a buffier belly and wingbars and all orange under bill compared to the previous pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*) – regular along forest edges

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*) – a regular sight around the plaza
Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – at the Gallon Jug airstrip
Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) – seen especially well in a fruiting tree the first morning
Rufous Mourner (*Rhytipterna holerythra*) – high in the vines along the Logger's Trails
Yucatan Flycatcher (*Myiarchus yucatanensis*) – its plaintive voice heard along Sylvester Rd. trail
Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – its mournful voice heard daily, also seen most days of the trip
Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – in the same fruiting tree with an Attila
Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – perched in a cecropia in the cocoa plantation
Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) – oddly silent, but regular around the lodge
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – in all open areas
Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*) – wintering alongside look-alike Tropical Kingbirds
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – one fully tailed male at Gallon Jug

GENERA Incerta Sedis

Thrush-like Schiffornis (*Schiffornis turdinus*) – bathing in the shallow edge of Chan Chich Ck.; its musical phrase was heard on several days in the forest
Rufous Piha (*Lipaugus unirufus*) – like a large Rufous Mourner, seen perched on a loop of vine
Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – seen several times around Gallon Jug, including a group of six along the fence lines near a fruiting tree
Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) – a pair seen the first morning, in a fruiting tree
Black-crowned Tityra (*Tityra inquisitor*) – a handsome pair near the Ornate Hawk-Eagle nest

MANAKINS:

White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) – a female, with bright orange legs, was a regular in the fruiting trees next to our dining table
Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) – ditto for a stunning male, red head in brilliant contrast with all black body

VIREOS and ALLIES:

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)
Mangrove Vireo (*Vireo pallens*) – at the water feature one lunchtime
Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)
Tawny-crowned Greenlet (*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*) – seen best late in the trip, its sharp whistles signaling a mixed foraging flock
Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*)
Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – overhead in a taller tree in the cocoa plantation, one of two species seen just at 11:11 a.m. on 1/1/11

JAYS, MAGPIES & CROWS:

Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*)

SWALLOWS & MARTINS:

Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*)
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

WRENS:

Spot-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus maculipectus*) – more often heard than seen, with its brisk upslurred phrase like a thumb running down the teeth of a comb
Northern House [House] Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – patrolling the walkways near the lodge
White-bellied Wren (*Uropsila leucogastra*) – heard along Norman's Temple Trail

White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – its unmistakable voice was heard often in the forest underbrush

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – the tiny bird with the hypodermic bill

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

THRUSHES & ALLIES:

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – Shy in the nesting season farther north, Wood Thrushes were one of the most commonly seen birds along road and trail sides, almost tame

Clay-colored Robin [Thrush] (*Turdus grayi*)

White-throated Thrush (*Turdus assimilis*) – two along the Logger's Trail were a lucky find

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS:

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – ubiquitous wintering migrants

Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) – seen by all prior to landing at Chan Chich

NEW WORLD WARBLERS:

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) – briefly in the cocoa plantation

Northern Parula (*Parula americana*)

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)

Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) – perhaps the single most reliable bird in the forest

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) – a flock of the “Myrtle” form at Gallon Jug

Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) – a Neotropical migrant mixing in the forest foraging flocks with resident tropical species

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) – real beauties

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – a regular in forest mixed flocks

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – lots of great views, mostly females

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*)

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) – walking, bobbing along the trails and walkways

Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) – close comparison with Louisiana Waterthrush

Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) – seen nicely along several creek edges

Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*) – bathing in the late afternoon along Chan Chich Ck.

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) – at Laguna Seca

Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) – best views of birds at late afternoon bathing spots

Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) – ditto

Golden-crowned Warbler (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) – working the tangles in forest mixed flocks

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) – seen best bathing in the water feather alongside our dining table

TANAGERS & ALLIES:

Gray-headed Tanager (*Eucometis penicillata*) – at a couple of ant swarms, bright yellow bodies

Black-throated Shrike-Tanager (*Lanio aurantius*) – Its sharp calls signaled a mixed flock in the forest, this boldly colored flock leader was seen very well at two different afternoon bathing spots along Chan Chich Ck.

Yellow-winged Tanager (*Thraupis abbas*) – a pair visited the fruiting trees at the veranda

Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – daily in the African tulip trees, sometimes looking blue, other times green – or was it turquoise?

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – Candi and Deirdre saw one at the nectar feeder hanging at their cabana

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Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) – their loud calls attracted us to them as they foraged in the trees on the plaza

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS & ALLIES:

White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*) – The male's musical song was heard all day long around the plaza, and both sexes visited the water feature.

Green-backed Sparrow (*Arremonops chloronotus*) – in the cocoa plantation

CARDINALS & ALLIES:

Rose-throated Tanager (*Piranga roseogularis*) – Though elusive, along the Sylvester Rd. trail, a male finally perched in the open high in the branches.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*) – both species of ant-tanagers turned up at ant swarms and along the trails in the absence of ants

Red-throated Ant-Tanager (*Habia fuscicauda*)

Black-faced Grosbeak (*Caryothraustes poliogaster*) – It took a bit of searching, but a noisy flock just overhead in the trees along the Logger's Trail finally revealed themselves.

Blue-black Grosbeak (*Cyanocompsa cyanooides*) – rich brown colored females were seen

Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parellina*) – mostly brown females

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) – a few wintering buntings along the road and at the plaza

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES & ALLIES:

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) – Its voice became a familiar, welcome sound.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

Giant Cowbird (*Scaphidura oryzivora*) – one at Gallon Jug

Black-cowled Oriole (*Icterus dominicensis*) – the black and yellow oriole that visited the fruiting trees around the lodge

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – a few wintering migrants, among them a female that bathed alongside the veranda on several occasions

Montezuma Oropendola (*Psarocolius montezuma*) – massive and unmistakable, a few frequented the African tulip tree and the Gallon Jug gardens

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS, EUPHONIAS & ALLIES

Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) – a male bathed at the water feature, yellow below with a blue-black throat

Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) – like the above, with a yellow throat

Olive-backed Euphonia (*Euphonia gouldi*) – these little gems graced the water feature daily

MAMMALS AND HERPS:

Yucatan Black Howler Monkey (*Alouatta pigra*) – Their roaring calls were a regular part of the Chan Chich experience. We had superb looks at males posturing and howling, face on.

Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) – swinging through the trees, some carrying small babies on their backs

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – these petite foxes seemed almost tame around the plaza and along the Sylvester Rd. trail

White-nosed Coati (*Nasua narica*) – in the trees during our final morning walk

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – thick in the cleared area at Gallon Jug

Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – seen by Candi and Deirdre

Paca (*Agouti paca*) – one crossed the road in front of the truck during our night drive

Deppe's Squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*)

Slider (*Trachemys scripta*)

House Gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) – its kissing sounds signaled dusk

Brown (Striped) Basilisk (*Basiliscus vittatus*) – the lizards along the plaza walkways

Shiny Skink/Central American Mabuya (*Mabuya unimarginata*) – at the escarpment

Brown Anole (*Anolis sagrei*)

Red-footed Tree Frog (*Hyla loquax*) – the likely identity of the ‘teeny, tiny, tawny toad’

Gulf Coast Toad (*Bufo valliceps*)

Leafcutter Ants

Army Ants