

# **JAMAICA**

**MARCH 30 – APRIL 6, 2011**

**LEADERS: STEVE HILTY  
& BRANDON HAY**

**COMPILED BY: STEVE HILTY**

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.  
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003  
AUSTIN, TX 78746  
[WWW.VENTBIRD.COM](http://WWW.VENTBIRD.COM)**

# JAMAICAN ENDEMICIS

**March 30 – April 6, 2011**

JAMAICA! Yeah Man! Doctorbirds; Immigration frowns; Right hand driving; Dueling Digicel and Claro phone service; Lost bags; Narrow curvy roads; Red Stripe beer; Big Rat Auto Parts; Jamaican Redpolls (cows for you non-farmers); Shine-eye (White-eyed Thrush); Jamaican Tody; Jerk Center (pulled pork and chicken); Rastafarians; Allspice; Piggie's Mini-Mart; Yam Poles; Wait-a-bit; Jamaican Patois; Ol' John Chuit (Black-whiskered Vireo); the Ice-man; Potoos and owls; Marshall's Pen; Hargreve Hospital in Mandeville; Juici Patti; Club Money Train; A mi' dis, Nice-up yum pot; Mango-carrot juice; Crested Quail-Dove; Blue Mountain Coffee; Rainforest Seafood (no kidding, a real restaurant); bus driver Tyrone (honk if you see a curve ahead) and his appendaged cell phone(s); purple sorrel drink; the Courtleigh.

We extend our condolences to Brennan Mulrooney who regularly guides this trip but, at the last moment this year, was unable to guide because of a family tragedy. In a panic at the thought of a "leaderless" trip (well, there is a very competent local fellow in Lionel Town named Brandon Hay), the VENT office seemed overwhelmed with gratitude that I could help (?). Are you kidding? From my perspective, this was a gift from manna, or from somewhere. With visions of sandy beaches and panoramas of palm trees passing before my eyes, I did, however, have something to learn about Jamaica. With barely twelve hours notice before joining this trip as your "leader," and having never set foot on the island, I hurriedly looked up where Jamaica was located on a map, read that there were twenty-eight species of extant endemic birds, and noted that quite a few of the endemics had a sister-species look-alike on one or more other Caribbean islands. I also remembered a childhood story I'd read that their most famous bird was the streamertail, a gorgeous little hummingbird with two "streaming" tail feathers, and somewhere on the island there lurked a small bird called an Arrowhead Warbler. That was pretty much the sum of my Jamaican background. A last-minute phone call to Brennan filled in a few blank spots, but left many others!

It is not often that the guide sees more life birds on a trip than the clients, but on this trip my list was as large as or larger than most of yours—and what fun it was. This pleasant and easy trip progresses more or less diagonally across the island from the northeast (Montego Bay) to the far southeast (Kingston) with a major pause for exploration in approximately the center of the island at an old colonial estate with the unlikely name of Marshall's Pen, and an equally unlikely host (Ann Sutton) who is blond (remember now, this is Jamaica), engaging, energetic, and the owner of this historic and storied property. Ann is also an author, birder, ardent and active conservationist, and keeper of the history of all things that matter at Marshall's Pen. One could hardly imagine a more delightful host or a more delightful place to stay, and in the capable hands of Jamaican guide Brandon Hay, finding the endemics seemed almost too easy...except for that quail-dove which demanded more respect,

but finally gave us a beautiful show in the Blue Mountains. This trip offered digressions to marshes, mangroves, the famous cockpit region of the north central region (drier and more rugged than I had imagined), the humid and higher mountains of the eastern end of the island including the famous “Blue Mountain” coffee region, and the lovely John Crow Mountains and coast.

Judging from comments solicited at our final evening dinner (we generally had plenty of time at these meals in Kingston), the trip highlights were rich and varied, and included (in no particular order) the island’s remarkable line-up of cuckoos; the Crested Quail-Dove as it jerkily foraged back and forth for trifles in a road; the streamertail experience at Rockland; Ann Sutton’s hospitality; the Hargreave Hospital (not particularly a highlight, but it figured prominently in Rick’s Jamaica experience); Alex Twyman’s Old Tavern Coffee Estate; the Jamaican Tody (signature Greater Antillean genus); the West Indian Whistling-Duck (my entry); Masked Ducks; and the Yellow-breasted Crakes. The local Bananaquit wasn’t bad either. Tyrone’s driving did not make the list, but his horn honking was memorable to say the least.

I hope that you enjoyed this little trip in all its varied aspects. I was certainly pleased to be a part of it. With a sweep of the twenty-eight extant endemics (blame the mongoose for the two modern endemics now judged extinct) and nearly a half-dozen endemic subspecies, we did about as well as possible. Good birding and safe travels.

### **Itinerary (major sites):**

Day 1: Satori Hotel; Rockland Bird Sanctuary; Marshall’s Pen (cattle farm and wildlife reserve etc)

Day 2: Marshall’s Pen; vicinity of Black River including Parottee Bay mangroves; Patchfield Pond and Elim Dyke Ponds

Day 3: Cockpit country in vicinity of Burnt Hill Road; Martin’s Hill (grassy fields)

Day 4: Marshall’s Pen; Lionel Town (lunch); Portland Cottage; Cockpit Salt Marshes and Kingston

Day 5: Blue Mountains in vicinity of New Castle; also Silver Hill; and Hardware Gap

Day 6: East end of island at Hector’s River (vicinity of Happy Grove School and the tropicbirds); John Crow Mountains (Ecclesdown Road); Portland Parrish (memorable lunch); return to Kingston

Hd = heard (preceded by (\*))

**boldface and underlined** = endemic to the island of Jamaica

Underlined = endemic subspecies on island of Jamaica

### **Bird List: subspecies are provided for selected island endemics etc.**

#### ANATIDAE

West Indian Whistling-Duck, *Dendrocygna arborea*, 2 at Elim Dyke Road; apparently scarce and declining throughout small Caribbean range; a good find and a Caribbean endemic

Blue-winged Teal, *Anas discors*, Black River area (1000+)  
Masked Duck, *Nomonyx dominicus*, 2 (M&F) at Patchfield Pond near Black River;  
another good find as this species can be unpredictable in occurrence

#### PODICIPEDIDAE

Least Grebe, *Tachybaptus dominicus dominicus*, 1 first day (roadside pond);  
Caribbean subspecies  
Pied-billed Grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps antillarum*, 2 near Cockpit Salt Marsh;  
Caribbean subspecies

#### PELECANIDAE

Brown Pelican, *Pelecanus occidentalis*, coastal areas

#### PHALACROCORACIDAE

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*, Montego Bay etc

#### FREGATIDAE

Magnificent Frigatebird, *Fregata magnificens*, Montego Bay; Black River etc

#### ARDEIDAE

Least Bittern, *Ixobrychus exilis*, 1 flushed over Cockpit Salt Marsh (seen by a couple  
people)  
Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*  
Great Egret, *Ardea albus*, almost all wetlands and coastal areas  
Reddish Egret, *Egretta rufescens*, 1 white bird at Black River  
Little Blue Heron, *Egretta tricolor*, coast and inland areas  
Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*, coastal and inland bodies of water  
Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*, throughout  
Green Heron, *Butorides striatus*, Black River  
Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Elim Dyke Ponds

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE

#### CICONIDAE

Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*, mostly inland wetlands; Elim Dyke area

#### CATHARTIDAE,

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*, daily (common)

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*, almost daily near bodies of water  
Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis*, 2-3 seen over inland areas; endemic  
Caribbean subspecies

#### FALCONIDAE

American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*, daily

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, 1 at Elim Dyke area (unusual individual with heavily marked underparts spotted with white)

#### RALLIDAE

\*Sora, *Porzana carolina*, heard at freshwater marsh

Yellow-breasted Crake, *Porzana flaviventer*, 2 adults and chick along Cockpit Salt Marsh where seen in open several times; spectacular opportunity to observe this locally distributed species; amazingly Brandon Hay virtually guaranteed it and then produced it (but not before we had spent a considerable amount of effort waiting and watching and then only because of Jim Fincke's sharp eyes at spotting the pair and the chick); not endemic but a great find

Purple Gallinule, *Porphyrio martinica*, 6 or more at Elim Dyke Road

Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*, small numbers at several freshwater sites

American Coot, *Fulica americana*, Black River area (<15)

#### ARAMIDAE

Limpkin, *Aramus guarauna*, 1 at Elim Dyke Road

#### CHARADRIIDAE

Black-bellied Plover, *Pluvialis squatarola*, 1 at Black River mud flats

Semipalmated Plover, *Charadrius semipalmatus*, 30+ at Black River mud flats

Killdeer, *Charadrius vociferus*, one at Satori Hotel and several in Black River area

#### RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt, *Himantopus mexicanus*, 10+ at black River mud flats

#### JACANIDAE

Northern Jacana, *Jacana jacana*, fresh water marshes

#### SCOLOPACIDAE

Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularius*, 1 unspotted bird at Satori Hotel in Montego Bay; another at inland marsh

Greater Yellowlegs, *Tringa melanoleuca*, <5 at Black River mudflats

Willet, *Tringa semipalmata*, beach near Satori Hotel; Black River mudflats

Lesser Yellowlegs, *Tringa flavipes*, 2 at Black River mudflats

Ruddy Turnstone, *Arenaria interpres*, ca. 4 at Black River mudflats

Semipalmated Sandpiper, *Calidris pusilla*, 10 or more at Black River mudflats

Western Sandpiper, *Calidris mauri*, at least 2 (probably more) at Black River mudflats

Least Sandpiper, *Calidris minutilla*, 8-10 or more at Black River mudflats

#### LARIDAE

Laughing Gull, *Leucophaeus atricilla*, Montego Bay and Black River mudflats

Gull-billed Tern, *Gelochelidon nilotica*, 3 at Black River mudflats

Royal Tern, *Thalasseus maximus*, small numbers along all coastal sites

Sandwich Tern, *Thalasseus sandvicensis*, 1 at Black River mudflats

## COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon, *Columba livia*, towns and cities throughout

White-crowned Pigeon, *Patagioenas leucocephala*, daily and particularly numerous around Satori Hotel in Montego Bay

**Ring-tailed Pigeon, *Patagioenas inornata***, 1 seen in “cockpit” and singles both days in Blue Mountains and John Crow Mountains respectively on our trips out of Kingston

White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica*, daily in numbers; particularly numerous in drier regions around Montego Bay and at Marshall’s Pen

Zenaida Dove, *Zenaida aurita*, daily in varying numbers; only a couple at the Satori Hotel but seen regularly in clearing at Marshall’s Pen and elsewhere

Mourning Dove, *Zenaida macroura*, reported at least twice including once at Marshall’s Pen and again the last day along east coast of island; seems decidedly uncommon or at least in much lower numbers than the allied Zenaida Dove

**Common Ground-Dove, *Columbina passerina jamaicensis***, seen daily and perhaps best at Rockland and at the cracked corn feeders at Marshall’s Pen; an endemic subspecies

Caribbean Dove, *Leptotila jamaicensis*, Marshall’s Pen (numerous)

**Crested Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon versicolor***, finally seen very well by everyone in the Blue Mountains north of Kingston; single bird walking in road and later this same bird seen again by two members of our group; a good find and one of the most sought species of the trip (and certainly a highlight for me; love that jerky and mechanical little saunter back and forth across the road!)

Ruddy Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon montana*, heard in Blue Mountains; seen briefly but very well in close flight parallel to road and then crossing road in front of us; seen by most of group (including a few who were in the bus at the time); striking bright rufous plumage (brighter than continental S Amer birds)

## PSITTACIDAE

**Olive-throated Parakeet, *Aratinga nana nana***, seen daily (nos. varying from 2-12+) but almost always in flight and never seen in scope; an endemic subspecies

**Yellow-billed Parrot, *Amazona collaria***, a few in “cockpit” country and then a surprising pair seen close up in scope at Marshall’s Pen (where decidedly scarce and probably only sporadic or seasonal with fruit supply); an endemic parrot

**Black-billed Parrot, *Amazona agilis***, numerous in “cockpit” country; singles or pair in Blue Mts. And John Crow Mts.; an endemic parrot

## CUCULIDAE

Mangrove Cuckoo, *Coccyzus minor*, heard and later seen in scope at Marshall’s Pen including a pair copulating

**Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, *Coccyzus pluvialis***, daily at Marshall’s Pen and Blue Mountains but not conspicuous; endemic species of island

**Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, *Coccyzus vetula***, daily at Marshall’s Pen and Blue Mountains; at least heard and seen by some in John Crow Mountains; another cool-looking endemic

Smooth-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*, daily in small groups; largest number seen on drive from Montego Bay to Mandeville and on to Marshall's Pen

#### TYTONIDAE

Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*, 1 seen on fence post on return to Marshall's Pen from Elim Dyke Road; in spotlight from bus

#### STRIGIDAE

**Jamaican Owl, *Pseudoscops grammicus***, seen several times both morning and evening around Marshall's Pen

#### CAPRIMULGIDAE

Antillean Nighthawk, *Chordeiles gundlachi*, 1 or 2 seen at dusk one evening at Marshall's Pen; no vocalization heard

#### NYCTIBIDAE

Northern Potoo, *Nyctibius jamaicensis jamaicensis*, seen on two evenings including once quite close and once in scope

#### APODIDAE

White-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne zonaris*, group of 3 and another group of up to 15 at Marshall's Pen

**Antillean Palm-Swift, *Tachornis phoenicobia phoenicobia***, singles and groups of 5 and 6 on three consecutive days

#### TROCHILIDAE

**Jamaican Mango, *Anthracothorax mango***, several at Rockland; also at Marshall's Pen

**Red-billed Streamertail, *Trochilus polytmus polytmus***, spectacular experience at Rockland with birds perching on people's fingers to sip nectar; elsewhere generally common to abundant throughout except in John Crow Mountains where replaced by next form

**Black-billed Streamertail, *Trochilus polytmus scitulus***, several seen in John Crow Mountain area; by some regarded as a separate species from Red-billed form; by others regarded as a well-marked race of Red-billed but seems likely that this species may eventually be officially split although still not split by AOU checklist

Vervain Hummingbird, *Mellisuga minima minima*, smaller than all but the Cuban Bee Hummingbird and possibly the Little Woodstar (of S Amer); tiny by any hummingbird standard but fairly common; Caribbean endemic

#### TOTIDAE

**Jamaican Tody, *Todus todus***, daily and one of the "stars" of the trip with pastel palette of color and quick movements; looks a lot like most other todies of this characteristically "Caribbean" group of birds

## ALCEDINIDAE

Belted Kingfisher, *Megaceryle alcyon*, common and seen daily (mostly in flight); all breeding in N America and winter here and elsewhere for a few months

## PICIDAE

**Jamaican Woodpecker, *Melanerpes radiolatus***, common and noisy; this lovely island woodpecker (just about has the entire island to itself as shares Jamaica only with the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker which is seasonal and uncommon (at best) here; conspicuous and easy to see; found in all habitats

## TYRANNIDAE

**Jamaican Elaenia, *Myiopagis cotta***, seen well at Marshall's Pen; heard in Blue Mountains and hd in John Crow mountains; has a small narrow white superciliary that may be its most prominent feature

Greater Antillean Elaenia, *Elaenia fallax*, finally seen in Blue Mountains when a single bird perched close and in the open for scope views

**Jamaican Pewee, *Contopus pallidus***, one seen at Marshall's Pen and another seen by some in the John Crow Mountains; classic *Contopus* shape with upright posture and large eyes and alert attitude; shivers tail when it alights after a short sally to air

**Sad Flycatcher, *Myiarchus barbirostris***, quite common at Marshall's Pen and also seen in Blue Mountains; not sure where the English name derives but hardly a "Sad" bird; distinctive for a *Myiarchus* with small size and reduced wing markings and longish and thin and sharply hooked (at tip) bill

**Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, *Myiarchus validus***, daily at Marshall's Pen including one bird descending to ground to gather nest material; also seen well in Blue Mountains; whinny call similar to that occasionally heard by Short-crested Flycatcher (*M. ferox*) in S Amer.

Stolid Flycatcher, *Myiarchus stolidus stolidus*, one seen in dry mesquite (*Prosopis sp.*) in Portland Cottage area; differs from Sad Flycatcher in larger size, heavier bill and much more obvious wing bars and wing edgings as well as voice; another bird with an odd name; a Caribbean endemic

Gray Kingbird, *Tyrannus dominicensis*, pairs seen daily in almost all areas but considerably less numerous than Loggerhead Kingbird

Loggerhead Kingbird, *Tyrannus caudifasciatus jamaicensis*, common and widespread and seen daily in virtually all areas; certainly one of the most conspicuous passerines in Jamaica; a Caribbean endemic

## TITYRIDAE AND ALLIES

**Jamaican Becard, *Pachyramphus niger***, both male and female seen at Marshall's Pen but male most conspicuous; also seen in Blue Mountains and two nests in John Crow Mountains (nests may or may not have been occupied); one active nest seen at Marshall's Pen (nest built around a series of branches rather than wedged into fork)

## VIREONIDAE

**Jamaican Vireo, *Vireo modestus***, seen in “cockpit” country (where quite vocal); also seen in Blue Mountains; like allied white-eyed Vireo this is a small bird with an attitude

**Blue Mountain Vireo, *Vireo flavifrons***, first seen in “cockpit” country and later also in the Blue Mountains; less vocal than Jamaican Vireo and drabber in plumage

Black-whiskered Vireo, *Vireo altiloquus*, this seasonal breeder (non-breeders migrate apparently mostly to northern S Amer) is doubtless the commonest and most persistent singer of any species on the island; seems common virtually everywhere there are trees; known locally as John Chuit or Ol’ John Chuit and you can surely guess why (it is also known as Tom Kelly in other parts of the Caribbean which also is a rhythmic onomatopoeic name)

## CORVIDAE

**Jamaican Crow, *Corvus jamaicensis***, first seen at Rockland; elsewhere singles and pairs or trios seen at Marshall’s Pen; in “cockpit” country; and in both Blue and John Crow mountains; notable for small size, broad wings and remarkably vocal repertoire; a local name

## HIRUNDINIDAE

Caribbean Martin, *Progne dominicensis*, a couple seen in “cockpit” country by Brandon Hay and some of the group (where was I at the time?)

Cave Swallow, *Petrochelidon fulva poeciloma*, seen even before we left Satori Hotel and thereafter small groups seen daily except in Blue Mountains

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, numerous over sugar cane and in Elim Dyke area and scattered birds elsewhere

## TURDIDAE

Rufous-throated Solitaire, *Myadestes genibarbis*, great studies of this striking member of the genus in the Blue Mountains; seen close up in forest (where singing) and also more distantly in scope

**White-eyed Thrush, *Turdus jamaicensis***, more skulking (at times) and not as easy to see as the next species although we had numerous great observations of this bird both on the ground and in trees at Marshall’s Pen and the Blue and John Crow mountains; known locally as “Shine Eye” and “Glass Eye” names both colorful and not inappropriate

**White-chinned Thrush, *Turdus aurantius***, the common “*Turdus*” on the island; much more conspicuous and noisy than the previous species; regularly descends to ground or onto fallen logs to forage

## MIMIDAE

Northern Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottos*, common to abundant just about everywhere including towns, settled areas and arid zones but scarce in heavily wooded regions; noisy and often mimics vocalizations of other species

Bahama Mockingbird, *Mimus gundlachii hillii*, highly localized species found in arid southwestern coastal region (mesquite scrub) where easily told by lack of white in

wings and larger size and streaking on cheeks and sides of neck and sides of breast; in short something of a large coarse-looking mockingbird; apparently seldom mimics; a Caribbean endemic

#### STURNIDAE

European Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*, this alien species seems well-established in Jamaica as we saw singles to several daily in virtually all areas including even Marshall's Pen

#### PARULIDAE

Northern Parula, *Parula americana*, one seen in vicinity of the Satori Hotel in Montego Bay; no others definitely identified

Yellow Warbler, *Dendroica petechia eoa*, one seen on April 3 in Portland Cottage region; this subspecies occurs only in Jamaica and the Caymans and does not have chestnut on the head

Cape May Warbler, *Dendroica caerulescens*, one female (or first year male) seen in the Blue Mountains (at feeders at our lunch stop); initially confusing because the bird was so strongly streaked underneath (suggesting perhaps it was a young male); this was our only sighting

Black-throated Blue Warbler, *Dendroica caerulescens*, commonest North American breeding migrant on the island; seen in all wooded or semi-wooded areas with up to a dozen a day on a few occasions

Black-throated Green Warbler, *Dendroica virens*, only one seen—a female-plumaged bird in the Blue Mountains

Prairie Warbler, *Dendroica discolor*, fairly common and widespread on the island; we saw this species around the Satori Hotel and at Marshall's Pen and Black River among other sites; both males (bright) and females

**Arrowhead Warbler, *Dendroica pharetra***, Jamaican endemic that initially vexed several people trying to get a good look at it; we found a pair feeding an all-brown juvenile and eventually saw it almost daily with everyone seeing this high-energy fidgeting imp numerous times

Black-and-white Warbler, *Mniotilta varia*, singles or a couple seen on most days of the trip (except the first two); a rather low density northern wintering species (at least this season when we were told by local ornithologist Brandon Hay that North American breeding warblers generally were present in much lower numbers this season than in previous years

American Redstart, *Setophaga ruticilla*, 2-10 seen most days and perhaps the second most numerous North American breeding visitor after the Black-throated Blue Warbler

Ovenbird, *Seiurus aurocapilla*, one at Rockland the first morning; a couple more seen at Marshall's Pen

Common Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas*, one female seen in tall grass at the Satori Hotel the first morning (but only seen by R Saunders); no others on the trip

## THRAUPIDAE

Bananaquit, *Coereba flaveola*, this widespread and engaging little bird is represented by a strikingly colorful race on Jamaica (one of some 41 subspecies so far described); as do Bananaquits elsewhere these are little busybodies that sip nectar and habitually build nests including dummy nests and are often bold and fearless and easy to see; a fascinating species; the taxonomy on your VENT checklist is dated as recent molecular genetic work now confirms with little doubt that this species is a “tanager” (a family now very much in taxonomic transition and a family no longer represented in the United States except for the White-collared Seedeater!); I can hear the howls of protest already but the winds of change are upon us

**Jamaican Spindalis, *Spindalis nigricephala***, we saw males and females of this species quite a few times at Marshall’s Pen and in the Blue and John Crow mountains; surely one of the largest *Spindalis* in physical size and easily told from the nearby Cuban birds by its olive (not black) back; listed as a “tanager” on your checklist and left here in this position but new molecular genetic work now confirms that all *Spindalis* are not closely related to core tanagers and instead are much closer to Cardinalids (so no need for that “*Incertae Sedis* designation anymore)

## EMBERIZIDS

Yellow-faced Grassquit, *Tiaris olivaceus olivaceus*, common species on Jamaica; seen at Rockland and Marshall’s Pen and just about everywhere else; another genus (*Tiaris*) that molecular genetics now shows to be allied with Tanagers rather than emberizids (buntings and finches) so watch for this change on future checklists; a Caribbean endemic subspecies

Black-faced Grassquit, *Tiaris bicolor*, numerous on Jamaica although perhaps slightly fewer in numbers than the previous species; as with Yellow-faced Grassquit also found by the molecular genetic crowd (mitochondrial DNA work) to be more closely allied to tanagers than to emberizids

**Yellow-shouldered Grassquit, *Loxipasser anoxanthus***, monotypic genus and an island endemic with an uncertain (at present) taxonomic placement; we saw 2-several daily at Marshall’s Pen and in the eastern mountain regions; more of a forest-based species than the *Tiaris* grassquits

Greater Antillean Bullfinch, *Loxigilla violacea ruficollis*, fairly common and one to several seen just about everywhere on island although generally rather inconspicuous and tending to keep within vegetation where inconspicuous (at least much of the time); molecular genetic work indicates this species is best placed with the tanagers and is also part of a group of Antillean/Caribbean species that are allied to Galápagos finches (which also are tanagers); a Caribbean endemic

**Orangequit, *Euneornis campestris***, odd little Jamaican endemic that is somewhat Bananaquit-like in behavior but less of a busybody; feeds on nectar to a considerable extent

**Grasshopper Sparrow, *Ammodramus savannarum savannarum***, one seen beautifully on fence wire at one of Brandon’s stake-out sites; possibly something of a relic distribution on Jamaica as there originally must have been relatively little

appropriate habitat for this species; remarkably the Jamaican subspecies is the nominate (original or first ones collected for science where here on the island of Jamaica); there are other old scattered relic populations of this species including some in the Cauca Valley of Colombia (who would' a thought?);

#### ICTERIDAE

**Jamaican Blackbird, *Nesopsar nigerrimus***, of the twenty-eight or so extant Jamaican endemic birds this is one of the harder ones to see although Brandon Hay did not make it seem so because he found one fairly quickly in the John Crow mountains and later J Fincke (sharp eyes) spotted another perched closer; both afforded nice telescope studies of this curious semi-bromeliad- and epiphyte-specialist of Jamaican mountain forests; it's preferred foraging sites certainly seem to have something to do with the evolution of its remarkably long bill (long at least for an icterid)

Greater Antillean Grackle, *Quiscalus niger crassirostris*, widespread and common in lower zones throughout the island; typically *Quiscalus* (grackle) in bill and tail shape and behavior; a Caribbean endemic

Shiny Cowbird, *Molothrus bonariensis*, we saw only a couple individuals of this species on Jamaica; everywhere a nest parasite and know to victimize more than 160 species over its ample South American distribution; has recently spread northward and reached Florida some twenty years ago

**Jamaican Oriole, *Icterus leucopteryx leucopteryx***, widespread and easy-to-see Jamaican near-endemic; the white wing coverts (all of them) are well noted in the scientific name of this species; sips nectar and we observed one stabbing the bases of the corollas of the large flowers of a vine in the Blue Mountains to get at the nectar in a behavior that short-circuits the pollination of the flowers (a.k.a. a nectar thief in the manner of a flowerpiercer); also occurs on Isla San Andres (Colombian island) east of Nicaragua

#### FRINGILLIDAE

**Jamaican Euphonia, *Euphonia jamaica***, rather hard-to-see island endemic of wooded regions; some of our group observed a pair building a nest which was a typical football-shaped affair with side entrance and little grass porch over the entrance (very stylish) about 10 m up and wedged into a bromeliad in a tree somewhat isolated from forest at Marshall's Pen

#### ESTRILDIDAE

Scaly-breasted (Nutmeg) Mannikin (Munia), *Lonchura punctulata*, pair seen at the Satori Hotel by R Saunders and one or two others; an alien introduced for unknown reasons (well they are cute); seems to go by a variety of names but the name "Mannikin" seems inappropriate and confusing especially because of the New World group known as Manakins (sounds the same but spelled differently and certainly no relationship taxonomically)

**MAMMAL LIST:** (a short list)

Mongoose (Herpestidae), A deliberate but unfortunate introduction to the island of Jamaica; it may have seemed a good idea at the time (early 1800s) but these critters quickly spread everywhere and are credited with the extinction of the Jamaican Petrel and the likely extinction (?) of the Jamaican Poorwill; Brandon Hay says that other species are declining likely as a result of the presence of this species including especially the Crested Quail-Dove (although quail-doves nest a meter or two above ground which may offer some protection from the rapacious nature of the mongoose which does not climb trees; we saw at least 3 in the Elim Dyke Road area (near Black River) and at least 4 more in the sugar cane-growing region at the eastern end of the island. Incidentally there are about 33 recognized species of mongooses; and despite looking like weasels the two groups are unrelated.

**OTHER STUFF:**

Several species of anoles including *Anolis armani* (green); *Anolis lineatopus* (brownish); and *Anolis grahami* (bluish turquoise) among others  
House Gecko, *Hemidactylus mabouia*  
Zebra Heliconia, *Heliconius charithonia*  
Julia Butterfly, *Dryas julae*

**SOME PLANTS NOTED** (in no particular order and certainly not a comprehensive list of what we saw, just a list of what I jotted down in my notebook. Brandon Hay was quite knowledgeable about the flora of his island and very helpful in identifying a number of plants): for more information do a google search of Flora of Jamaica;

*Leonotis* sp. Lamiaceae (mint at Martin's farm and elsewhere), sometimes known as Lion's ear; distinctive plant with flowers clustered in isolated whorls around main stem; common along roadsides and especially at the Grasshopper Sparrow site  
*Lantana* sp. (probably *camara*), Verbenaceae; widespread ; another species of *Lantana* was seen in the Blue Mountains and is probably a native species  
*Ixora* sp. (cultivated shrub around Satori Hotel etc; small red flowers with 4 petals)  
*Ageratum* spp. Asteraceae; pinkish flower along roadsides; some species introduced  
Butterfly weed, *Asclepias* sp. Apocynaceae, several of these beautiful orange plants seen along the roadside in John Crow mountains; not sure of the species involved but quite similar to those in North America  
*Rhexia* sp. Melastomataceae; the beautiful pink flower (usually singly) with 4 large petals noted frequently along roadsides in John Crow Mountains; known as Meadow Beauty in North America (where there are only a handful of species in this widespread pan-tropical family)  
*Plantain* sp.  
West Indian Cedar, *Cedrela* sp. (probably *odorata*), Marshall's Pen (a couple large trees near main house)  
*Pithecellobium* sp. (the large spreading trees known as "Saman")  
Sensitive Plant, *Mimosa* sp., Fabaceae (subfamily Mimosoideae); several small low-growing plants along roadsides; touch the leaves and they fold; flowers are pink "balls" with tiny gold tips; these were originally placed in another genus  
*Cecropia* sp.

Mango, *Mangifera indica*

Citrus, *Citrus spp.* Rutaceae; oranges, lemons etc.

Coffee, *Coffea arabica*, Rubiaceae; native of Ethiopia and Sudan but now worldwide; there are dozens of species of *Coffea* and I do not know if the one in Jamaica is actually *arabica*. The most widely used psychoactive drug in the world.

Cultivation actually began and the beverage was developed on the Arabian Peninsula (not in Africa or elsewhere)

Sorrel, the purple drink at the Starlight Chalet; this is not an *Oxalis* but I could not find the genus of this in a quick google search

Coconut Palm (widespread on island)

Croton, *Codiaeum variegatum* (Euphorbiaceae), common multicolored foliage around houses, Marshall's Pen etc.

*Prosopis* sp. (mesquite; dominate in arid zones in Portland Ridge area on southwestern coast)

Coral vine, *Antigonon* sp., Polygonaceae, the pink climbing vine that was common all along the roadsides in the Portland Ridge to Lionel town area

Red Ginger, *Antorcha* sp. (Zingiberaceae), commonly planted around houses etc

Ginger spp. (most of the large hillsides covered with gingers are an introduced species)

*Hibiscus* spp. Malvaceae; common throughout

Papyrus, *Cyperus papyrus*, noted in several places by several people; this is an African genus that has been introduced widely around the world

Impatiens, *Impatiens* sp. (Balsaminaceae), roadsides in Blue and John Crow mountains

Passion vine, *Passiflora* spp. (we saw several species); also Periwinkle

*Blakea* sp. (*trinerva* and others), Melastomataceae with large pink flowers

*Brilantasia owariensis*, the big blue pea-like flowers along roadside in Blue Mountains (this name taken from the little book titled *Guide to the Blue and John Crown Mountains*, 2008, Edited by Margaret Hodges, but I cannot verify this plant on a google search

Mexican Daisy, the yellow Asteraceae ; another species name taken from the *Guide to the Blue and John Crown Mountains* but I cannot verify this one on google either; perhaps the larger yellow Asteraceae we saw in a few places

*Bletia* sp., the terrestrial orchid seen along roadside in Blue Mountains

*Bocconia frutescens*, shrub-sized; large-toothed leaf (common in Blue Mountains etc)

Breadfruit, *Artocarpus* sp. (probably *altilis*), we had some served to us at our "jerked pork and chicken lunch; not a big hit with the group and certainly not worth a mutiny

Rose Apple, *Syzygium* sp. (introduced Asian tree; shaving-brush flowers favored by Black-billed Streamertail; either Rose Apple or Malay Apple)

*Calceolaria* sp., called Lady's Purse or Slipper flower, now in Calceolariaceae (formerly Scrofulariaceae) (small yellow flowers that look like lady's slipper orchids along roadside

*Ficus* spp. (including strangler figs and other species)

*Piper* spp. Piperaceae (at least 2 spp. seen in Blue and John Crow Mts.; vertical, white slender" candle-like fruiting bodies); a member of the Black Pepper family

White Mangrove, *Laguncularia racemosa*, Portland Ridge area; this is the white mangrove in the western hemisphere

Araceae family (*Colocasia* sp. and/or *Xanthosoma* sp., known as taro in the southwest Pacific island region; these food plants were seen growing in several large fields planted to one of these plants; the food known as Callaloo is made from taro (or dasheen) in some areas; Ann Sutton indicated that the Callaloo we had at Marshall's Pen was from an Amaranth (*Amaranthus* sp.) which is apparently typical on Jamaica

Papaya, *Carica papaya*

Star Apple, *Chrysophyllum cainito* (family Sapotaceae), served at breakfast at Marshall's Pen

Gumbo Limbo, *Bursera simaruba*, reddish bark tree (also known by many other names) seen in the native forest on the arid Portland Ridge peninsula

Silk-cotton Tree, *Ceiba pentandra*, one noted on Portland Ridge peninsula; large smooth trunk but with no leaves or flowers; this trees actually observed in through scope

Mexican Cypress, *Cupressus lusitanica*, introduced tree

*Erythrina* sp. Fabaceae, thin red tubular flowers; several blooming in a fence line at Marshall's pen (widespread pan-tropical genus)

*Bauhinia* sp., Fabaceae, a few seen at Marshall's Pen in same area as the *Erythrina*'s above; mostly shrubs, vines and small trees (some called Orchid trees); heart-shaped leaves cleft in middle (like 2-part leaf)

Water Hyacinth (Pontederiaceae), one of the plants where we saw Yellow-breasted Crakes

*Tabebuia* sp. Bignoniaceae, trees with brilliant yellow flowers (i.e. at Marshall's Pen) which were mostly dropping their flowers this year (because of drought); we observed the White-chinned Thrush and other birds in one of these trees at Marshall's Pen

Angle-winged Begonia, *Begonia* sp. Begoniaceae (everywhere!)

*Clusia* sp. Clusiaceae, shrubs and hemi-epiphytic trees mostly; thick leathery ovate leaves

Gesneriaceae, we saw a number of species of in this family in humid roadsides in blue Mountains; none identified

Tropical Almond, *Terminalia catappa*, Combretaceae; several in Montego Bay etc including at the Sotari Hotel (a Prairie Warbler foraged in one of these trees just outside the hotel patio); flat-topped, shiny leaves, usually near beaches

*Bougainvillea* spp. and cultivars, (Nyctaginaceae), everywhere on the island

Angel's Trumpet, *Brugmansia* spp., small tree with enormous white pendant flowers noted in towns and people's yards; formerly in genus *Datura*

*Heliconia* spp. Lobster Claw was one species noted

Anthurium, Monstera and various arums (Araceae)

*Tillandsia* sp. (Bromeliad Family); nest of the Jamaican Euphonia was built in one of these epiphytic plants at Marshall's Pen

*Yucca*, *Yucca* sp. some large flowering agaves seen in the dry Portland Ridge area

“Maidenhair” Fern, *Adiantum* sp.; humid areas including a few areas at Marshall’s Pen; not sure of the species but certainly related to our Maidenhair Ferns in North America