

GRAND BELIZE

PART II: CHAN CHICH

MARCH 5 – 11, 2011

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We arrived at Chan Chich Lodge just in time for lunch, and quickly settled in to the outside tables facing a large water feature and a fruit-laden firebush. Before we could get our order taken, a stunning male Red-capped Manakin was spotted at eye level just 15 feet away. A flock of Ocellated Turkeys strolled about between the cabanas in the background, and two Crested Guans were seen in a nearby fig tree. An Ochre-bellied Flycatcher followed the manakin into the firebush and was joined by a Social Flycatcher, a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and a White-bellied Emerald. Two Black-cheeked Woodpeckers fed on palm fruit just off the veranda, and a Magnolia Warbler and a pair of White-collared Seedeaters came in to bathe. Just as drinks were being served, someone spotted a brilliant male Green Honeycreeper at the waterfall. A group of Red-lored Parrots sailed overhead screeching loudly, and then a Collared Aracari landed above the water. How were we ever going to eat with all these distractions?

As soon as we finished lunch and briefly settled into our rooms, we began birding in earnest. However, we made it no further than Cabana #1 where we discovered another fruiting fig tree, and this one was hopping with activity. Side by side, and no more than 25 feet off the ground, were both Central American spider monkeys and Mexican black howler monkeys providing some of the best views I have ever had of either species. A pair of Slaty-tailed Trogons and several Crested Guans joined in the buffet. Soon we had both Mealy and Red-lored parrots in the scope as well. Montezuma Oropendolas flew overhead, as did some Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts. Then came Olive-throated Parakeets, White-crowned Parrots, Masked Tityra, and Pale-billed Woodpecker. The parade of birds continued—and we had moved no more than 30 yards from where we had started!

Our six days at Chan Chich Lodge were filled with highlights and excitement. We had amazing luck with raptors, tallying all three hawk-eagles, including prolonged scope views of perched Ornate Hawk-Eagle and Black Hawk-Eagle, and a rarely seen Black-and-White Hawk-Eagle sailing lazily right overhead. White Hawks; Barred and Collared forest-falcons; Gray-headed, Double-toothed, and Plumbeous kites; and Bat Falcon rounded out the list. Short forest yielded such specialties as the regionally endemic Rose-throated Tanager, Gray-throated Chat, and Yellow-lored Parrot, in addition to other goodies such as Blue Ground-Dove, White-bellied Wren, Stub-tailed Spadebill, Barred Antshrike, Long-billed Gnatwren, Blue Bunting, and Green-backed Sparrow. Taller forest produced the likes of Great Tinamou, Great Curassow, Spotted Wood-Quail, a spectacular bathing Purple-crowned Fairy, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, four species of trogons, Emerald Toucanet (rare here), White-necked and White-whiskered puffbirds, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, and Strong-billed Woodcreeper. A Tody Motmot gave us walkaway scope views after some searching, and we had four Lovely

Cotingas! In the open country of Gallon Jug, we had Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Green-breasted Mango, and White-necked Jacobin, as well as five Fork-tailed Flycatchers at once on the road in front of our bus. A successful night drive added Yucatan Nightjar and Northern Potoo. A northern tamandua (lesser anteater) that crossed the road at one point was the icing on the cake.

In all we tallied over 200 species of birds while spending six nights in one of the greatest eco-tourist lodges in the world, surrounded by over 300,000 acres of protected forest! What could be better?

Itinerary:

March 5 - charter flight to Gallon Jug; afternoon birding at Chan Chich Lodge down to suspension bridge (51 species; 51 total)

March 6 - lodge clearing, walk to suspension bridge, & Back Plaza in am; afternoon to Gallon Jug (91 species; 103 total)

March 7 - Silvester Village & River trails; afternoon to bridge and Sac Be trail (115 species; 152 total)

March 8 - morning drive to Cedar Crossing & Laguna Seca; afternoon to Logger's Trail; night drive (103 species; 175 total)

March 9 - Xaxe Venic & Bajo trails; afternoon to Gallon Jug & Zibal (120 species; 196 total)

March 10 - predawn excursion at lodge, morning to escarpment; afternoon to River Trail & Logger's Trail (104 species; 207 total)

March 11 - optional morning walk to suspension bridge & Trish's Hill; charter flight to Belize City; departures for home (207 total species)

Key:

bold-faced species indicate birds of rare, casual, or accidental occurrence or species rarely seen even though they occur regularly

underlined species indicate birds of very uncommon occurrence or species which occur regularly but in such low densities as to be easily missed

Birds:

Great Tinamou (Tinamus major) this species was actually **seen** twice; normally heard only

Plain Chachalaca (Ortalis vetula)

Crested Guan (*Penelope purpurascens*) this species was more numerous than I have ever seen it here with 15 or more seen some days

Great Curassow (*Crax rubra*) nice views of a male near the escarpment

Spotted Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus guttatus*) seen by both groups on the Logger's Trail; irregular here

Ocellated Turkey (*Meleagris ocellata*) very common right around the cabanas, including displaying males

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Pinnated Bittern (*Botaurus pinnatus*) three in the grasses at Laguna Seca; very uncommon

Bare-throated Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) one in a swale at Gallon Jug

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) around Gallon Jug

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*)

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) on the night drive in Gallon Jug

Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) very unusual was one along the Logger's Trail

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) oddly one flying high over the lodge

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) daily

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) daily

King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) twenty seen

Gray-headed Kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*) four seen including one perched near the road

Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*) nine total including scope views of perched birds

Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) just arrived from wintering grounds

White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) five total; always stunning

Great Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus urubitinga*) one overhead near the escarpment

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) seen daily with a high count of 18 one day

Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) one of our first birds after arriving in Gallon Jug

Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) four total

Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus melanoleucus*) one or two from the escarpment, at one point right overhead; rarely seen anywhere

Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) an immature bird near the bridge provided superb scope views; a real treat to see this species perched

Ornate Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus ornatus*) a pair nesting along the Silvester Village Road resulted in some of the best views over of these magnificent species; voted the favorite bird of the tour!

Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) incredible views of an immature bird by one group along the Bajo Trail; rarely seen

Collared Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) adult actually seen by one group along the Silvester Village Road after considerable effort; normally heard only

Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*) often near the pool

Ruddy Crake (*Laterallus ruber*) heard only, as is generally the case
 Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*)
American Coot (*Fulica americana*) incredibly, one was on the forest floor along
 the river trail (perhaps brought in by the October hurricane); my first ever at Chan Chich
 Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)
 Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*)
 Scaled Pigeon (*Patagioenas speciosa*) heard only
 Red-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) this species has become common
 right around the lodge at Chan Chich
 Short-billed Pigeon (*Patagioenas nigrirostris*) nice studies
Plain-breasted Ground-Dove (*Columbina minuta*) an unexpected find here; only
 the second Gallon Jug area record
 Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*)
Blue Ground-Dove (*Claravis pretiosa*) pair near Cedar Crossing; uncommon
 Gray-headed Dove (*Leptotila plumbeiceps*) mostly heard
 Olive-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga nana*) subspecies *astec*
 Brown-hooded Parrot (*Pyrilia haematotis*) seen well one afternoon near Silvester
 Village
 White-crowned Parrot (*Pionus senilis*)
 White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*)
Yellow-lored Parrot (*Amazona xantholora*) along the Xaxe venic Trail; very
 uncommon here
 Red-lored Parrot (*Amazona autumnalis*) abundant at Chan Chich
 Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*) many great views
 Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) good views of this stunner; subspecies
thermophila
 Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*)
 Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) on night drive
 Mottled Owl (*Caccaba virgata*) seen on predawn option with Brian
 Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) usually right outside Phil & Kathy's
 room
Yucatan Nightjar (*Caprimulgus badius*) four seen; scope views; uncommon
 Northern Potoo (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*) two seen well on night drive
 Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*)
 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*)
 Long-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis longirostris*) almost daily around the lodge
 feeders; formerly Long-tailed Hermit
 Stripe-throated Hermit (*Phaethornis striigularis*) formerly Little Hermit
 Scaly-breasted Hummingbird (*Phaeochroa cuvierii*) our first spotted by Tom;
 another quite surprisingly spotted on the night drive!
Wedge-tailed Sabrewing (*Campylopterus curvipennis*) very uncommon
 White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*) seen best at the Gallon Jug feeders
 Green-breasted Mango (*Anthracothorax prevostii*) scope views of males &
 females in Gallon Jug
 Canivet's Emerald (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*) uncommon
 White-bellied Emerald (*Agyrtria candida*)

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*) seen daily
Buff-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia yucatanensis*) very uncommon in this area
 Purple-crowned Fairy (*Heliodytes barroti*) amazing bathing display along the creek;
 voted second favorite bird of the tour
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*)
 Black-headed Trogon (*Trogon melanocephalus*) several great views
 Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) ditto
Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) very uncommon around Chan Chich
 Slaty-tailed Trogon (*Trogon massena*) almost daily
Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) great views of this uncommon species
 thanks to Brian's spotting
 Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) heard only
 Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*)
 Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*)
American Pygmy Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle aenea*) by one group along the
 Logger's Trail
White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) pair along the road to
 Cedar Crossing; very uncommon in Gallon Jug region
 White-whiskered Puffbird (*Malacoptila panamensis*) a pair near the escarpment
 Rufous-tailed Jacamar (*Galbula ruficauda*) always spectacular
Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) seen on about 20% of trips here;
 great studies of pair near the King's Tomb
 Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) a regular visitor to the water feature by
 the restaurant
 Keel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) seen daily; the essence of the tropics!
 Black-cheeked Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pucherani*) wonderful studies on a
 daily basis of birds feeding on palms near the bar & restaurant
 Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) subspecies *dubius*
 Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Veniliornis fumigatus*) a low density species seen
 well
 Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Piculus rubiginosus*) seen best at the escarpment
 Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus castaneus*) great views of this
 spectacular woodpecker
 Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) less numerous than usual
 Pale-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus guatemalensis*) spectacular & plentiful
 Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*) less numerous than usual
Ruddy Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla homochroa*) unusual was one along the River
 Trail away from any ants; spotted by Cathy
 Olivaceous Woodcreeper (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*)
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) only one seen
Strong-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*) excellent views
 at 5:47 AM; very uncommon
 Ivory-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*)
 Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*)
Plain Antvireo heard only by one group
 Dusky Antbird (*Cercomacra tyrannina*) after some effort good views of a male

Black-faced Antthrush (Formicarius analis) one walked across the Xaxe Venic trail for one group; already split off as the Mexican Antthrush by some authors
 Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet (Ornithon semiflavum) several good views
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet (Camptostoma imberbe) heard only; uncommon
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (Elaenia martinica)
 Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (Mionectes oleagineus) often in the firebush by the restaurant
 Northern Bentbill (Oncostoma cinereigulare) not seen by all
 Eye-ringed Flatbill (Rhynchocyclus brevirostris) good views for all near escarpment
 Yellow-olive Flycatcher (Tolmomyias sulphurescens) good views by the leader's quarters for one group
 Stub-tailed Spadebill (Platyrinchus cancrorninus) actually seen fairly well by one group and part of the other (often just heard)
Royal Flycatcher (Onychorhynchus coronatus) two great sightings of this uncommon species
 Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher (Terenotriccus erythrurus)
 Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher (Myiobius sulphureipygius) especially well at bathing pools
 Tropical Pewee (Contopus cinereus)
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (Empidonax flaviventris)
 Least Flycatcher (Empidonax minimus)
 Vermilion Flycatcher (Pyrocephalus rubinus) pair in Gallon Jug upon our arrival; uncommon here
 Bright-rumped Attila (Attila spadiceus) good studies the last morning on Trish's Hill; subspecies *gaumeri*
 Rufous Mourner (Rhytipterna holerythra) spotted by Rosie
Yucatan Flycatcher (Myiarchus yucatanensis) heard only by one group
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher (Myiarchus tuberculifer) subspecies *lawrencei*
 Great Crested Flycatcher (Myiarchus crinitus) heard only
 Brown-crested Flycatcher (Myiarchus tyrannulus)
 Boat-billed Flycatcher (Megarhynchus pitangua) pair near Silvester Village
 Social Flycatcher (Myiozetetes similis) seen daily
 Tropical Kingbird (Tyrannus melancholicus)
 Couch's Kingbird (Tyrannus couchii) pair right around the rooms, plus others
 Fork-tailed Flycatcher (Tyrannus savana) always spectacular
 Thrush-like Schiffornis (Schiffornis turdinus) very close views the first afternoon
 Cinnamon Becard (Pachyramphus) nice studies of one at the bridge, plus a pair near the escarpment; uncommon
Rose-throated Becard (Pachyramphus aglaiae) uncommon; subspecies *sumichrasti*
 Masked Tityra (Tityra semifasciata)
Black-crowned Tityra (Tityra inquisitor) pair near the escarpment; very uncommon

Lovely Cotinga (*Cotinga amabilis*) lone females at the suspension bridge and along the Silvester Village road (great scope studies) and stunning male at the escarpment spotted by Brian; first in several years on this trip
 White-collared Manakin (*Manacus candei*) females only
 Red-capped Manakin (*Pipra mentalis*) fabulous male often in firebush by the restaurant
 White-eyed Vireo (*vireo griseus*)
 Mangrove Vireo (*Vireo pallens*)
 Yellow-throated Vireo (*vireo flavifrons*) by some in the firebush
 Tawny-crowned Greenlet (*Hylophilus ochraceiceps*) nice views on a couple of occasions
 Lesser Greenlet (*Hylophilus decurtatus*) seen daily
 Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) actually seen by everyone near the escarpment; most often heard only
 Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*) the southern race *fuliginosus*
 Purple Martin (*Progne subis*)
 Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) T,C
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) T,C
 Spot-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus maculipectus*) scope views for one group!; seen by all
 House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) the "Southern" House Wren of some authors (*T. musculus*)
 White-bellied Wren (*Uropsila leucogastra*) nice views of another skulker
 White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) yet another skulker; good studies
 Long-billed Gnatwren (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) great views for both groups of this striking bird
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*)
 Tropical Gnatcatcher (*Poiophtila plumbea*)
 Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) much scarcer than usual
 Clay-colored Thrush (*Turdus grayi*) seen daily; subspecies *grayi*
 Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)
Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) very uncommon
 Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)
 Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica penslyvanica*)
 Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) daily
 Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
 Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)
 Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) daily
 American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)
 Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*) one the first afternoon at the bathing spot
 Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)
 Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*)
 Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*)
 Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*) superb views at bathing pools

Common Yellowthroat (Geothlypis trichas)
 Hooded Warbler (Wilsonia citrina) seen best at the bathing pools
 Wilson's Warbler (Wilsonia pusilla) only one seen
 Golden-crowned Warbler (Basileuterus culicivorus)
 Yellow-breasted Chat (Icteria virens)
 Black-throated Shrike-Tanager (Lanio aurantus) strangely almost completely
 absent; one female seen
 Blue-gray Tanager (Thraupis episcopus)
 Yellow-winged Tanager (Thraupis abbas) scope views in Gallon Jug
Green Honeycreeper (Chlorophanes spiza) generally very uncommon here, but a
 male (initially spotted by Marianna) was a semi-regular visitor to the water feature
 Red-legged Honeycreeper (Cyanerpes cyaneus) stunning!
 Black-headed Saltator (Saltator atriceps)
 Blue-black Grassquit (Volatinia jacarina) sadly even a couple around the lodge
 post-hurricane
Variable Seedeater (Sporophila americana) a male in the coffee plantation was
 a tour first!
 White-collared Seedeater (Sporophila torqueola) common right around the rooms;
moreletti
 Green-backed Sparrow (Arremonops chloronotus) good views of this skulker
Rose-throated Tanager (Piranga roseogularis) another regional specialty; both
 male & female seen very well in the bajo forest
 Summer Tanager (Piranga rubra)
 Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (Habia rubica)
 Red-throated Ant-Tanager (Habia fuscicauda)
 Black-faced Grosbeak (Caryothraustes polioaster) much more numerous than
 usual
Gray-throated Chat (Granatellus sallaei) C---great views of this regional specialty for
 both groups
 Blue-black Grosbeak (Cyanocompsa cyanoides) excellent views for one group
 near hawk-eagle nest
Blue Bunting (Cyanocompsa parrellina) more numerous than usual
Blue Grosbeak (Passerina caerulea)
 Indigo Bunting (Passerina cyanea)
 Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) a recent invader to Gallon Jug
 Melodious Blackbird (Dives dives) seen daily
 Great-tailed Grackle (Quiscalus mexicanus)
 Bronzed Cowbird (Molothrus aeneus)
 Giant Cowbird (Molothrus oryzivorus)
 Black-cowled Oriole (Icterus prothemelas) best near the escarpment
 Orchard Oriole (Icterus spurius)
 Baltimore Oriole (Icterus galbula)
 Montezuma Oropendola (Gymnostinops montezuma)
 Yellow-throated Euphonia (Euphonia hirundinacea) less numerous than usual
 Olive-backed Euphonia (Euphonia gouldi) much scarcer than usual

total species - 209 (in combination with Grand Belize Part I, we totaled **309 species**)

Leader only birds:

Pheasant Cuckoo---heard only
Rufous Piha

Mammals:

Northern Raccoon
Central American Spider Monkey---repeated, excellent views
Mexican Black Howler Monkey---one of the great sounds of Central America; great views right near the rooms
White-nosed Coati---spotted by Marion at the bathing pools
Kinkajou---superb, close study on the night walk
Northern Tamandua---one walked right across the road in front of us below the escarpment; very uncommon
Gray Fox
Deppe's Squirrel
Central American Agouti
White-tailed Deer---many adorable fawns
various bat species left unidentified

total species - 11+

Reptiles & Amphibians:

Striped Basilisk
Brown Anole
Mediterranean or House Gecko
Central American Whiptail
Turnip-tailed Gecko---leaders only
tree frog species
Gulf Coast Toad---leader only
Marine (Cane) Toad
Common Slider
Morelet's Crocodile---great views
Fer-de-lance---two small ones
Tiger Tree Snake

total species - 12

Butterflies:

Yellow-spotted Swallowtail

kite swallowtail species
Thoas/ Giant Swallowtail
Cloudless Sulphur
Large Orange Sulphur
Orange-barred Sulphur
Little Yellow
Mimosa Yellow
Great Southern White
Florida White
Giant White
Julia
Banded Peacock
White Peacock
Monarch
Queen
blue species
Dusky Blue Groundstreak
Plain Satyr
White Satyr---leader only
Orange Banner
Gulf Fritillary
Many-banded Daggerwing
Zebra Longwing (Heliconian)
Erato Heliconian
Mexican Cycadian---scope views
Adelpha species
Mercurial Skipper
unidentified long tailed skipper species
spread wing skipper species
plus many others left unidentified

total species - 30+

Significant others:

Bullhorn Acacia Ant
army ants
leafcutter ants
scorpion
praying mantis
long-horned beetle
wolf spider
the much anticipated Excel spreadsheet