

EL TRIUNFO

March 17-27, 2007

Leaders: Victor Emanuel, Barry Lyon & Brad Boyle

Compiled By: Brad Boyle

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Tour Report by Victor Emanuel
Tour Birdlist Compiled by Brad Boyle

VENT operated the first tour ever to visit El Triunfo in March 1977, thirty years ago. Since then we have taken over three hundred birders to this remarkable cloud forest and have helped in the effort to protect it for future generations. Every trip we make seems to qualify as the best ever. In truth they have all been wonderful. This year's trip was another great experience. I had not been to El Triunfo, my favorite destination in the world, since 2004. It was wonderful to once again walk those marvelous trails, through truly magical forest, with a fine group of participants. I was especially glad that my good friends, Bob and Birgit Bateman, were part of the group. I had been urging them to come on this trip for ten years. They were finally able to fit it into their schedule. At our dinner the last night in Tapachula, Bob said to me, "Victor, you are right. This is the king of tours."

We enjoyed many special experiences on this trip. The first morning we had the best looks I have ever had at a Belted Flycatcher in Sumidero Canyon National Park. Later, Barry Lyon, who was co-leading the tour with me and Brad Boyle, electrified me and others by calling out, "I've got a Slender Sheartail." This very long-tailed hummingbird is endemic to Chiapas. I had only glimpsed one briefly years ago. This individual, a male, stayed around for about fifteen minutes and even perched repeatedly, allowing scope views.

Once we arrived at the valley of El Triunfo, we all felt as if we were truly in a tropical montane paradise. We awakened to the plaintive calls of Resplendent Quetzals and went to sleep listening to the hooting of Fulvous Owls. Everyone had numerous great looks at Quetzals and Horned Guans, as well as many other species. As spectacular as the Horned Guan is, some participants felt the Highland Guan, with its remarkable call and flight display, was almost as exciting.

Most memorable for me was sitting with part of the group, including the Batemans, beside the trail and observing a Horned Guan for over an hour. As we sat there, mostly in silence, we listened to the ethereal song of the Brown-backed Solitaire and the calls of an Emerald Toucanet. A soft wind rustled the leaves of the cloud forest trees. The Horned Guan had settled onto a moss-covered branch only 35 feet away from us. Bob

Bateman, one of the most renowned nature artists in the world, was sitting next to me sketching the guan's head. We all agreed it was one of our most memorable times ever in nature.

VENT is so fortunate to have Brad Boyle as a leader on our El Triunfo tours. He first co- led our El Triunfo trip with me and Greg Lasley in 1998 and has co-led it almost every year since then. Brad is both a world-class botanist and a superb tour leader. His knowledge of El Triunfo, and its birds, plants, and other living things, is truly awesome. He speaks fluent Spanish and has camped in many beautiful wild places in North and Central America with his wife Alice. Brad holds a Ph.D. from Washington University. His dissertation director was the late Alwyn Gentry, the greatest expert on the plants of the Neotropics that ever lived. Brad's knowledge of plants and of Mexican culture adds another dimension to the rich and fantastic experience that is El Triunfo. Brad is also trained in wilderness medicine, having completed the NOLS (National Outdoor Leadership School) course.

As I have written many times before, a journey to El Triunfo is a journey back in time to a Mexico that was pristine with forested mountain ridges as far as the eye can see. On this trip you are immersed in wilderness and the natural world in a way that few people ever are.

Itinerary:

March 17 – Late afternoon arrival at Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico.

March 18 – Morning birding at Sumidero Canyon, then drove to Jaltenango with a few birding stops en route.

March 19 – After breakfast we rode trucks to Finca Prusia, a coffee growing area on the Atlantic slope of the mountains. From Finca Prusia we hiked to El Triunfo.

March 20-22 – Birded the El Triunfo cloud forest. A number of different trails available for birding here allowed us to thoroughly explore the area.

March 23 – Hiked from El Triunfo to Cañada Honda birding en route. After leaving the cloud forest, we passed through pine-cypress forest before descending into the humid subtropical vegetation of Cañada Honda.

March 24 – Birded Canada Honda in the morning, then birded our way to Limonal in the afternoon.

March 25 – Birded the Limonal area in the early morning, then hiked down to Paval. The hike down took us along a series of ridges through a distinctive zone of oaks. The oaks were just leafing out, loaded with catkins, and crowded with hummingbirds and migrating warblers. The transition into tropical deciduous

forest closer to Pavál brought us to the rich lowland avifauna of the coastal foothills of Chiapas.

March 26 – Birded near Pavál in the early morning, then took the short hike to the dirt road where our truck met us. Ate lunch with our horsemen and their families, and continued on by truck to Mapastepec where we transferred to vans for the final ride to our hotel in Tapachula. Birded the hotel grounds in the late afternoon

March 27 – Departure for home

Site codes:

- S – Sumidero Canyon near Tuxtla Gutierrez (tropical and montane dry forest, with bamboo; from 2500-4000 feet elevation)
- J – Jaltenango and nearby Rio Grijalva valley; includes stops along highways (tropical dry forest; 2100 feet and lower) and ride up to Finca Prusia
- ET – El Triunfo cloud forest (about 6500 feet elevation; summit of Cerro El Triunfo is 8000 feet)
- H – Cañada Honda and area; includes pine-cypress forest above H (montane moist forest; 4500 feet elevation at H)
- L – Limonal (montane dry forest; 4200 feet elevation)
- P – Pavál (tropical dry to moist forest; 1600 feet elevation)
- T – Tapachula, mainly at the Hotel Loma Real (near sea level); also includes birds seen along highway

BIRDS OBSERVED

Common names in **bold** are species endemic to Mexico and northern Central America, as defined in Howell & Webb 1995 (A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America). This definition includes species ranging as far south as extreme northern Nicaragua, and, in a few cases, as far north as extreme SW USA. Common names in ***bold italics*** are narrow endemics, restricted almost entirely to Chiapas and adjacent Guatemala. Underlined species are rare or unusual for the area of the tour.

TINAMOUS (Tinamidae)

Thicket Tinamou (*Crypturellus cinnamomeus*) – heard occasionally from H to P, and seen by Betsy during her horseback ride down to P.

CHACHALACAS & GUANS (Cracidae)

White-bellied Chachalaca (*Ortalis leucogastra*) – T. On the hotel grounds at T on our last afternoon. Found only along the Pacific coast from Chiapas to northwestern Nicaragua.

Highland Guan (*Penelopina nigra*) – this species was heard daily from ET to P, and seen well by most at ET. Another “signature sound” of the Chiapas highlands: a slow ascending whistle, followed by the sound of “ripping sailcloth” as the male dives from a high perch. Ripping sound is made with the flight feathers. Ranges from the highlands of Chiapas and Guatemala to northern Nicaragua.

Horned Guan (*Oreophaps derbianus*) – Incredible views, including some close encounters along the Palo Gordo trail. One of the rarest and strangest of all Cracids.

NEW WORLD QUAILS (Odontophoridae)

Singing Quail (*Dactylortyx thoracicus*) – ET. A few people had good views of a male that inspected us at close range. The rollicking call of this species is one characteristic sound of the Mexican highlands.

PELICANS (Pelecanidae)

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – flying over the ET clearing! Only the second time this species has been observed on this tour.

CORMORANTS (Phalacrocoracidae)

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – far below in reservoir at S.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNs (Ardeidae)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – S, J, T

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – S, T

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – S, T

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) – S, J, T, mostly in fields along the highways

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – on way to J

AMERICAN VULTURES (Cathartidae)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – widespread, at all locations, including above the ET clearing

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – widespread, at all locations

King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – one seen soaring far below during our hike from L to P.

HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES (Accipitridae)

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) – T. One seen soaring over the clearing at ET

White-breasted Hawk (*Accipiter chionogaster*, or *A. striatus in part*) – One seen soaring overhead during the drive up to Finca Prusia, and another above the clearing at ET. Like a pale white Sharp-shinned Hawk; considered a separate species by some.

White Hawk (*Leucopternis albicollis*) – Two seen soaring high overhead at P.

Gray Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) – J, P. Particularly great views of one individual perched beside the road on the way to J,
Common Black-Hawk (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – J. One glimpsed by some flying down a stream on our way to the trailhead above Finca Prusia.
Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) – heard only near P
Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) – above the clearing at ET, also common at P
Short-tailed Hawk (*Buteo brachyurus*) – J, P, T. Mostly dark morph individuals.
Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) – T. A few individuals among the groups of migrating vultures soaring high overhead at T.
White-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*) –T, also one near Tuxtla Gutierrez, on way into town from airport.
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – J, ET, H
Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) – J. A spectacular sighting of two individuals during one of our stops during the drive to Finca Prusia.

CARACARAS & FALCONS (Falconidae)

Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – heard repeatedly around the clearing at ET, glimpsed briefly by a couple of people.
Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) – S, T
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) – ET, T

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES (Scolopacidae)

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) – at stop by river on way to J

PIGEONS & DOVES (Columbidae)

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) – S, J. Widespread in cities and towns
Red-billed Pigeon (*Columba flavirostris*) – S, J, P, T, plus a few sightings around the clearing at ET
Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*) –ET
Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) – S
White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) – S, J
Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*) – S, and on way to J
Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) – S, J, P, T, also around the clearing at ET
White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – this somewhat secretive terrestrial dry forest dove was heard commonly at S, J, also along trail from H to P. Glimpsed by a few people on the hike to P.
White-faced Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon albifacies*) – heard commonly in the cloud forest, seen by several people during our last full day at ET

PARROTS (Psittacidae)

Green Parakeet (*Aratinga holochlora*) – J. A small group flew overhead during our drive to Finca Prusia.
Orange-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga canicularis*) – Common at P, T
Orange-chinned Parakeet (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – T. A small flock flew low overhead near our hotel on the last evening.

White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*) – S, J, P, T. The common lowland *Amazona* parrot.

CUCKOOS (Cuculidae)

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) – P, T

Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*) – heard only near P

Pheasant Cuckoo (*Dromococcyx phasianellus*) – heard on the way up to Finca Prusia, and, amazingly, near the clearing at ET. This is the first time we have heard this lowland species in the cloud forest.

Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – S, J, P, T. Widespread in small numbers in lowlands

TYPICAL OWLS (Strigidae)

Pacific Screech-Owl (*Otus cooperi*) – Fabulous scope views of one in the mango trees behind our hotel in T

Spectacled Owl (*Lophostrix cristata*) – P. A surprise appearance in the middle of the night. This is 5th time this species has been recorded on the tour, and only the second time seen.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – S, T. Seen well at both locations

Mottled Owl (*Ciccaba virgata*) – we called on up at H, and also heard again the next night at L.

Fulvous Owl (*Strix fulvescens*)– excellent close-up views at ET. Restricted to the cloud forests of Chiapas, Guatemala, and Honduras.

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES (Caprimulgidae)

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – J. Several individual were seen soaring in the distance during our stop by the river just before J.

Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) – heard only at P

SWIFTS (Apodidae)

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – seen from J to H

Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) – widespread at many locations

HUMMINGBIRDS (Trochilidae)

Rufous Sabrewing (*Campylopterus rufus*) – H, L. A narrow endemic restricted to mid-elevation montane forest along the Pacific slope of the Sierra Madre of Chiapas and Guatemala.

Violet Sabrewing (*Campylopterus hemileucurus*) – One female seen near H

Green Violet-ear (*Colibri thalassinus*) – ET

Emerald-chinned Hummingbird (*Abeillia abeillei*) – J, H, L. Mostly in drier mid-motane forests

Canivet's Emerald (*Chlorostilbon canivetii*) – S, J. Formerly known as Fork-tailed Emerald

Blue-throated Goldentail (*Hylocharis eliciae*) – J. One seen at one of our stops on the way to Finca Prusia.

Azure-crowned Hummingbird (*Agyrtria cyanocephala*) – S, J

Berylline Hummingbird (*Saucerottia beryllina*) – S, J, L, P, T

Cinnamon Hummingbird (*Amazilia rutila*) – T

Green-throated Mountain-Gem (*Lampornis viridipallens*) – ET. The common cloud forest hummingbird at ET

Garnet-throated Hummingbird (*Lamprolaima rhami*) – ET. A single individual seen briefly feeding at canopy bromeliads along the Cerro Bandera trail.

Magnificent Hummingbird (*Eugenes fulgens*) – seen at the hibiscus at the start of the Cerro Triunfo trail

Long-billed Starthroat (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – P

Slender Sheartail (*Calothorax enicura*) – S. A gorgeous, long-tailed male fed in plain view at roads end above Cañon Sumidero. Endemic to the northern half of the Chiapas-Guatemala highlands. This species is absent from the wetter Sierra Madre Sur, where ET is located. A first for this tour!

Wine-throated Hummingbird (*Atthis ellioti*) – ET

TROGONS (Trogonidae)

Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) – S, P

Mountain Trogon (*Trogon mexicanus*) – heard commonly at ET, but seen only by Anne

Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) – ET, also during hike up from Finca Prusia

Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) – ET. Numerous spectacular views, including multiple chasing males and fly-overs.

MOTMOTS (Momotidae)

Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*) – J, L, P. This was a fabulous year for Tody Motmots. Many of us were treated to repeated prolonged studies of this normally shy, cryptic species. One was even seen attending an ant swarm.

Blue-throated Motmot (*Aspatha gularis*) – ET, H

Russet-crowned Motmot (*Momotus mexicanus*) – S, J

Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) – Heard on the way up from Finca Prusia, and finally seen at P

Turquoise-browed Motmot (*Eumomota superciliosa*) – J, P. Seen by a few people.

KINGFISHERS (Alcedinidae)

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) – J, P

TOUCANS (Ramphastidae)

Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*) – J, ET

Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – P

WOODPECKERS (Picidae)

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – J; seen by some above Finca Prusia

Golden-fronted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes aurifrons*) – lowland areas: S, P, and T

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – J; seen during ride up to Finca Prusia. First ever sighting on this tour.

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*) – heard at ET, and finally seen at H

Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Piculus rubiginosus*) – S, P; also heard at ET

Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – J (on drive to Finca Prusia) & P. One seen well in the open on our hotel grounds at T.

OVENBIRDS (Furnariidae)

Scaly-throated (Spectacled) Foliage-gleaner (*Anabacerthia variegaticeps*) – ET

Ruddy Foliage-gleaner (*Automolus rubiginosus*) – This skulking understory foliage-gleaner was finally seen by most at ET

WOODCREEPERS (Dendrocolaptidae)

Olivaceous Woodcreeper (*Sittasomus griseicapillus*) – near P

Northern Barred Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes santithornae*) – L; seen during hike down to P.

Ivory-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*) – Seen near J; also heard frequently from H to P.

Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*) – ET

Streak-headed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – J, T

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes affinis*) – ET

TYPICAL ANTBIRDS (Thamnophilidae)

Barred Antshrike (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – P

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS (Tyrannidae)

Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – J; seen during ride to Finca Prusia

Greenish Elaenia (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – J; seen during ride to Finca Prusia

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (*Mionectes oleagineus*) J; seen during ride to Finca Prusia

Paltry Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius vilissimus*) – ET; heard commonly in the cloud forest, several people were finally able to observe this diminutive canopy-foraging flycatcher

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (*Tolmomyias sulphurescens*) – J, P, T

Tufted Flycatcher (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – ET; seen daily in the cloud forest

Stub-tailed Spadebill (*Platyrinchus cancrominus*) – heard only during hike from L to P

Belted Flycatcher (*Xenotriccus callizonus*) – S; this very local habitat specialist forages close to the ground in mid-elevation forests with an abundance of the bamboo *Chusquea*. Restricted to drier parts of the Guatemala-Chiapas highlands.

Olive-side Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) – J, ET, H, L; several sightings this year, many more than on previous trips

Greater Pewee (*Contopus pertinax*) – J; one seen during ride up to Finca Prusia

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) – one was observed vocalizing during our hike from L to P

Tropical Pewee (*Contopus cinereus*) – P

Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) – P

White-throated Flycatcher (*Empidonax albigularis*) – one tame individual seen regularly around the clearing at ET. We were fortunate to enjoy scope studies of this interesting tropical *Empidonax* flycatcher. Similar in appearance (and closely

related) to Willow and Alder Flycatchers, this short-distance altitudinal migrant winters in lowland tropical marshes and breeds in nearby highlands.

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*) – P

Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) – ET; seen daily in small numbers in the cloud forest

Dusky Flycatcher (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – S, P

Yellowish Flycatcher (*Empidonax flavescens*) – the common forest flycatcher at ET

Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) – before J, also during drive up to Finca Prusia

Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – S, J

Bright-rumped Attila (*Attila spadiceus*) – near L

Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – heard commonly at middle and lower elevations; finally seen by many people near P

Nutting's Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*) – S

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – common in lowlands at S, J, P, and T

Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – J, P, T

Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) – S, J, P, T

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*) – P

Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – heard only near P

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – S, J, P, T

Couch's Kingbird (*Tyrannus couchii*) – S, J. Almost indistinguishable in appearance

from Tropical Kingbird; we were fortunate to observe this species vocalizing on more than one occasion. Normally restricted to the Gulf-slope in Mexico, with few records from interior and Pacific slope Chiapas. This is only the second time this species has been recorded on this tour.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – S, J, P, T

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – several seen migrating high overhead at T, also near Tuxtla Gutiérrez

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) – in fields alongside the road on the drive to P

Rose-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus aglaiae*) – common this year at ET, also near L and P

Masked Tityra (*Tityra semifasciata*) – J, P, T. Several around P were seen well

MANAKINS (Pipridae)

Long-tailed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia linearis*) – the “toledo” call made by duetting males is one of the characteristic sounds of the drier forests from H down to P. We had several excellent views of handsome males.

VIREOS & ALLIES (Vireonidae)

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) – seen at S only; an interesting example of a mostly Gulf-slope (eastern Mexico) species which strays westward locally near Sumidero Canyon. First record for this tour.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) – P; uncommon in this part of Chiapas

Plumbeous Vireo (*Vireo plumbeus*) – J, ET, H, L, and during hike down to P. The subspecies in this part of Chiapas is more similar in appearance to Cassin's Vireo than to the pale gray subspecies which breeds in western North America.

Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) – ET, H, L

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) – J, H, L, P
Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*) – H, L
Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) – common at P
Green Shrike-Vireo (*Vireolanius pulchellus*) – one seen by some during the hike down to P
Rufous-browed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) – S, J, P

JAYS (Corvidae)

White-throated Magpie-Jay (*Calocitta formosa*) – S, J, P
Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*) – S, J, above and near P
Black-throated Jay (*Cyanolyca pumilo*) – this shy *Cyanolyca* jay was heard commonly and seen occasionally during our stay in the cloud forest at ET
Unicolored Jay (*Aphelocoma unicolor*) – ET; larger, noisier and easier to observe than the Black-throated Jay

SWALLOWS (Hirundinidae)

Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) – S
Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – S, J
Black-capped Swallow (*Notiochelidon pileata*) – J; seen during the ride up to Finca Prusia. Endemic to the highlands of Chiapas & Guatemala
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – S, J
Ridgeway's Rough-winged Swallow (*S. serripennis ridgewayi*, or *S. ridgewayi*) – S. This Mexican resident is probably a separate species, closely related to the migrant Northern Rough-winged Swallow. Distinguished from the latter species primarily by the dark-tipped crissum.
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – S, J, P
Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – P
Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) – P
Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – S

WRENS (Troglodytidae)

Giant Wren (*Campylorhynchus chiapensis*) – seen on our hotel grounds at T. This large, noisy wren is restricted entirely to the coastal plain of Chiapas
Rufous-naped Wren (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha*) – Seen by many behind Inocente's house, near where we stopped for lunch on the last day.
Spot-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus maculipectus*) – H, L, P. Heard only.
Rufous-and-white Wren (*Thryothorus rufalbus*) – H, L, P. One of the beautiful bird songs of the world, common in mid-elevation forest of Pacific slope
Plain Wren (*Thryothorus modestus*) – J, P, T
Rufous-browed Wren (*Troglodytes rufociliatus*) – ET. Fewer observations than in previous years; a few people saw this species along the Cerro Bandera trail.
White-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – H, L. Also heard on way up to ET
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*) – ET. Heard daily in the cloud forest, and seen well by most people

GNATCATCHERS (Poliopitidae)

White-lored Gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila albilorus*) – S. Restricted to the arid thorn forests of southern Mexico and Central America. A first for this tour.

THRUSHES (Turdidae)

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) – on in the clearing at ET. A first for the tour.

Brown-backed Solitaire (*Myadestes occidentalis*) – heard and seen from ET down to P. The strange, jumbled song of this species is a characteristic sound of the Mexican highlands

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – near L and above P

Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus frantzii*) – ET

Spotted Nightingale-Thrush (*Catharus dryas*) – a few sightings at ET; much less common than in previous years.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) – H, L, P. A common migrant from H down to the Pacific foothills

Black Robin (*Turdus infuscatus*) – common at ET, its North American Robin-like song was heard throughout our stay in the cloud forest

Mountain Robin (*Turdus plebejus*) – several seen at ET

Clay-colored Robin (*Turdus grayi*) – seen at all locations, including the clearing at ET

White-throated Robin (*Turdus assimilis*) – H, L, P

WAXWINGS (Bombycillidae)

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – ET, H, L, P, T. Unusually common this year; in many years not recorded at all

SILKY-FLYCATCHERS (Ptilgonatidae)

Gray Silky-flycatcher (*Ptilogonys cinereus*) – seen daily at ET

WOOD-WARBLEDERS (Parulidae)

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) –H to P. A common migrant at middle elevations on the Pacific slope

Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) – S, ET, H, L

Crescent-chested Warbler (*Parula superciliosa*) – ET. A characteristic warbler of the Mexican highlands

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) – P

Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) – S, P

Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) – seen at most locations, including around the clearing at ET

Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) – ET, H, L

Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*) – ET, also above H in the "cipresal" (pine-cypress forest)

Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*) – heard only in pines above the road during the drive up to Finca Prusia

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – S, J, H, L, P

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – one seen during hike down to P

Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) – one seen at ET. A first for the tour.

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*) – S. Seen briefly by some at our stop at the final overlook at S.

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) – One was seen by a couple people at the river stop before entering Jaltenango.

Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) – ET, H – common in the cloud forest, down to H

Slate-throated Redstart (*Myioborus miniatus*) – ET, H. Common at middle and higher elevations

Fan-tailed Warbler (*Euthlypis lachrymosa*) – from H to P, also during hike up to ET.

Multiple individuals of these beautiful warblers were observed foraging at ant swarms on at least three occasions.

Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – just above P

Golden-crowned Warbler (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) – L, P, also during hike up to ET.

This is the common *Basileuterus* warbler at middle elevations below cloud forest.

Golden-browed Warbler (*Basileuterus belli*) – daily in the cloud forest at ET

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) – J. Seen by a few people at the Black Hawk-Eagle stop below Finca Prusia.

TANAGERS & ALLIES (Thraupidae)

Common Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*) – common at ET with some down to L

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager (*Habia rubica*) – heard at S and seen a couple of times during the hike down to P

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – seen by some during the hike down to P

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – common migrant, seen at various locations throughout the trip

Flame-colored Tanager (*Piranga bidentata*) – fairly common at ET

White-winged Tanager (*Piranga leucoptera*) – this striking species was seen during the hike from ET to H, also in the dry oak zone during the hike down to P

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) – S, P

Yellow-winged Tanager (*Thraupis abbas*) – S, ET, J

Azure-rumped Tanager (*Tangara cabanisi*) – H; restricted to moist, middle elevation canyons along the Pacific slope of Chiapas and nearby Guatemala

Red-legged Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – J, L, P; seen at several locations from mid to low elevations

SPARROWS & SEEDEATERS (Emberizidae)

Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) – alongside road on way to J, also P

White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*) – on way to J, also P

White-naped (Yellow-throated) Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes albinucha*) – ET

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinucha*) – ET

Olive Sparrow (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*) – common at S

Prevost's Ground-Sparrow (*Melospiza biarcuatum*) – we saw this little known sparrow during our morning at P

White-eared Ground-Sparrow (*Melospiza leucotis*) – L, P

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – in the clearing at ET

SALTATORS, GROSBEAKS, & BUNTINGS (Cardinalidae)

Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) – S

Black-headed Saltator (*Saltator atriceps*) – S, J, P

Yellow Grosbeak (*Pheucticus chrysopheplus*) – common in the clearing at ET

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – J, H, P

Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) – P

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) – J, P

Varied Bunting (*Passerina versicolor*) – S. A first for the tour.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) – P

ORIOLES, BLACKBIRDS, & ALLIES (Icteridae)

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – several, on way to J

Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) – P, T. For many years this widespread lowland species was also present in the clearing at ET, but now apparently absent.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – S, J, P, T; throughout in the lowlands, especially in towns and cities – S, J, P, T

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) – J

Black-vented Oriole (*Icterus wagleri*) – S

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) – S, J

Streak-backed Oriole (*Icterus pustulatus*) – several seen from S to J

Spot-breasted Oriole (*Icterus pectoralis*) – a few seen at P

Altamira Oriole (*Icterus gularis*) – S, J, P, T

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – S, J, P

Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) – S, P

Yellow-winged Cacique (*Cacicus melanicterus*) – S, J, P

SISKINS, CROSSBILLS & ALLIES (Fringillidae)

Scrub Euphonia (*Euphonia affinis*) – J (on way to Finca Prusia), P

Yellow-throated Euphonia (*Euphonia hirundinacea*) – S, P

Elegant Euphonia (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – ET, H, L

Blue-crowned Chlorophonia (*Chlorophonia occipitalis*) – ET, H, down to L

Black-headed Siskin (*Carduelis notata*) – J; a lucky sighting on our way to Finca Prusia

Hooded Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes abeillei*) – heard only at ET

OLD WORLD SPARROWS (Passeridae)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – S, J, P, T; towns and cities

239 bird species seen

6 species heard only

245 species total

OTHER OBSERVATIONS OF INTEREST:

REPTILES

Godman's Pit-viper (*Cerrophidion godmani*) – ET. This small, rather placid cloud forest viper ranges from southern Mexico to Costa Rica.

MAMMALS

Variegated Squirrel (*Sciurus variegatoides*) – T

Deppe's Squirrel (*Sciurus deppei*) – the common small squirrel of the cloud forest at ET
Central American Agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – ET; Palo Gordo trail

Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) -- S

Cacomixtle, Southern Ring-tailed Cat (*Bassariscus sumichrasti*) – heard frequently around ET clearing, down to L. Victor finally called one in along the Finca Prusia trail at ET. A nocturnal, long-tailed relative of the racoon.

Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*) – Seen by Becky at ET

Central American Spider Monkey (*Ateles geoffreyi*) – ET to L. An unusually high number of sightings this year.

Baird's Tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*) – tracks on the trails at ET

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – twice seen out in the open behind the comedor at ET

Puma, Cougar (*Felis concolor*) – tracks only, along Palo Gordo trail at ET

BUTTERFLIES

Throughout our time in El Triunfo we noted large numbers of butterflies. Due to the lack of a field guide to the butterflies of the region, we relied almost entirely on the *Butterflies of Northeastern Mexico*, by Kim Garwood and Richard Lehman, second edition 2005.

Many of the butterflies we saw eluded identification, yet we did identify many to species, and several others to genus.

Abderus Swallowtail – (*Pterourus garamas abderus*)

Narrow-banded Dartwhite – (*Catantix flisa*)

Phoebis species – The most-widely encountered *Phoebis* is the Cloudless Sulphur, however, there are many closely-related look-alikes, and identification of the many we saw in the highlands around El Triunfo was not possible.

Large Orange Sulphur (*Phoebis agarithe*)

Apricot Sulphur (*Phoebis argante*)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

Common Morpho (*Morpho helenor Montezuma*)

Gold-edged Giant-Owl (*Caligo atreus*)

Myscelia species – Commonly known as “Bluewings,” these butterflies are characterized by beautiful blue and black stripes on the upperwing with white spots at the wingtips. Underneath they are marked by a calico pattern of earth tones; they perch with their wings folded. We saw one type commonly at *Sumidero Canyon*.

Hamadryas species – Commonly known as “Crackers,” these butterflies possess a subtle beauty. Not boasting brilliant colors, they are marked by complicated

patterns of spangling and appear in various shades of gray and brown; they have the interesting habit of perching upside down, with wings folded. A couple at the lower elevations at Sumidero Canyon.

Karwinski's Beauty (*Smyrna karwinski*) – This butterfly appeared by the hundreds around El Triunfo. Especially interesting was the sight of hundreds clustered on the underside of one of the camp outbuildings. During our stay, a lepidopterist named Andy Warren showed up and determined that we were seeing this species and not the similar Blomfield's Beauty (*S. blomfieldia*). According to Warren, Karwinski's Beauty is a rare butterfly, so we were fortunate to have seen it. His explanation for the clustering and apparent inaction of the butterflies was that they were ready to breed but were waiting for the rains to begin.

Rusty-tipped Page (*Siproeta epaphus*)

Celerio Sister (*Adelpha serpa celerio*)

Mexican Silverspot (*Dione Moneta*)

Mountain Longwing (*Heliconius hortense*)

Two-barred Flasher (*Astraptes fulgerator*) – The skipper with the orange head and upper thorax (below) and blue head and thorax (above) was likely this species or something else very similar.