

SHORT WEST MEXICO

JANUARY 6-12, 2007

LEADER: MARSHALL J. ILIFF

COMPILED BY: MARSHALL J. ILIFF

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003
AUSTIN, TX 78746
WWW.VENTBIRD.COM
*Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc.***

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Our Short West Mexico trip to Rancho Primavera is my favorite of all the tours I have led. Rancho Primavera is simply one of the most comfortable places I have visited on any VENT tour, thanks to superb meals, mid-afternoon limeade, balanced morning breakfasts, and excellent rooms. We are incredibly lucky to be invited to this family ranch (which is not a guest ranch under other circumstances) and owe it all to Pat and Bonnie, the mother-daughter team that keeps this ranch running. I can't express how welcome and comfortable they make us feel, and hold them fully accountable for the great time that I have had on every one of my four trips to the ranch.

The birds and birding in the immediate Rancho Primavera area continue to impress me as well. In addition to large numbers of wintering Neotropical migrants, there is also a large selection of resident Mexican birds to entertain the visiting American. As a gauge of the area's diversity, consider the following: 267 species in six days of birding; 132 species found on foot at Rancho Primavera in a single day (we tried even harder this year); at least 118 (max 142) species seen on all five full birding days; and 16 new additions to the cumulative VENT list which now totals 339! It makes your head spin.

This year our longest day turned out to be my favorite—our full day of birding from the ranch to the coast at Tehuamixtle (Tehua for short). We started early, hoping to see a couple of special owls before dawn. In fact we ended up seeing three species of owls, and hearing two more. As dawn broke, we crossed our fingers at a Crested Guan spot and almost immediately met with success, thanks to Father Tom's sharp eyes. Scope views were had by all of this large (tasty!) bird that must be very rare in this area of heavy hunting pressure.

Our next stop was a spot where I had had good luck with Bright-rumped Attila the previous year, and we were instantly treated to a vocal response that was followed up with good scope views of this odd flycatcher with its improbable bill. I tried to set a quick pace after that to get to the thorn forest below Llano Grande, but the distractions were many. We couldn't help but stop when a flock of magpie-jays, with their long tails trailing behind them like ribbons, crossed the road. Another stop yielded a bird that was new for the area for me: Gray-crowned Yellowthroat.

For the next couple of hours, every roadside stop produced masses of birds responding to our pygmy-owl imitations and team spishing. Especially memorable birds included a Lineated Woodpecker with its red crest aflame in the morning sun; an endemic Citreoline Trogon glaring yellow-eyed at us from the thorny canopy; two agitated Olive Sparrows responding to our tape; and two different male Red-breasted Chats—perhaps my favorite bird anywhere—one of which paused for scope views! More subtle but equally exciting were three different Flammulated Flycatchers, a thorn forest endemic that is very rarely seen, but which I have seen well on my past three tours here. Another surprise awaited us downslope—a pair of calling Great Black-Hawks—a new Mexico bird for me!

As the day got hotter and the bird activity died down (a little), we worked our way to the coast where Cande's restaurant provided shady tables alongside a secluded cove where we enjoyed

diving boobies of two species. While we waited for our food, several of us donned swimsuits and snorkels to check out the marine life, which was phenomenal—angelfish, parrotfish, damsels, urchins, and an amazing spotted moray eel were our rewards.

After a great meal and some relaxation, we headed back out to the estuary and sewage ponds, and to round up a Black-capped Gnatcatcher. My favorite moment of the day came when a Lesser Ground-Cuckoo suddenly announced its presence upslope. A quick dash back to the van for a tape and a scope, and we were quickly in position to try to get this shy bird out in the open. After a minute of tape the cuckoo suddenly flew into an exposed limb and sat still for 10 minutes of up-close scope views—the turquoise and yellow orbital ring vivid in the perfect light. After we'd had our fill, I tried a little more tape and the cuckoo dropped silently to the floor of the thorn forest, and then crept ever-so-slowly towards us, taking some five minutes to cover just 40 feet, and recalling a tiny dinosaur. Once it reached the forest edge it paused, reluctant to come fully into the open, and then glided across the road and disappeared. My best experience ever with that species.

The other highlights were far too many to mention (including a fun-filled afternoon of “tramping”), but I am anxious to return to this diverse and unique area, and anxious to again enjoy the hospitality that Pat and Bonnie shower upon all their guests at Rancho Primavera.

ITINERARY:

Day 1, January 6: Arrival in Puerto Vallarta; afternoon birding at Río Ameca mouth (RAM) (64 species).

Day 2, January 7: Departing at the reasonable hour of 7:15, we headed south to La Presa Cajon de Pena. We were sidetracked en route by Snail Kite (first Jalisco record?) and Mexican Parrotlets (among others). From 9:00-12:00 we hiked down to the valley below the reservoir; lunch at Altamira Restaurant; La Bascula Road (15:00-17:45); evening at Ranch ponds (131 species; 165 total).

Day 3, January 8: We departed at a reasonable hour this morning and birded along Cienega Ojuelos Road, adding some choice species. We had our lunch at Chico's Paradise in Juntas Verano. After lunch we relaxed and did some evening birding on the ranch, where we rounded up Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush and Rosy Thrush-Tanager. Evening at the Ranch Ponds again (118 species; 198 total).

Day 4, January 9: Early departure for Tehua, with 45 minutes of birding at the secret owl spot followed by birding on route including the forest trail and the estero at Maito. Relaxing lunch and snorkeling at Cande's in Tehua (13:30–15:30) followed by a successful effort on Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Lesser Ground-Cuckoo. Visit to the estero and sewage ponds at Aquiles de Serdan. We returned to the ranch at about 7:45 for dinner (142 species; 234 total).

Day 5, January 10: We birded La Bascula Road (7:30-12:30); lunch at Bob's (Pizza) Restaurant at the “Botanical Gardens”; after a brief break at the ranch, we headed south to the fields around Cruz de Loreto, where we stayed until 19:00 for Limpkin as well as for a small pond that was full of jacanas and Purple Gallinules! (135 species; 258 total)

Day 6, January 11: A more mellow day today, we set out to set a Rancho Primavera Big Day list. We began with successful owling for Mottled Owl and greeted dawn at the ranch ponds where Pat and Bonnie had breakfast ready for us. From there we explored to the eastern property boundary and then birded the trails to the west. After lunch at Altamira Restaurant, we headed back out for more birding, with several intrepid hikers

wielding machetes and following Bonnie up the hill to the west. We concluded again with another visit to the ponds. (134 species, 265 total; ranch Big Day total **132**, bettering last year's record by five!).

Day 7, January 12: Departure for home, with early morning departure (6:00) for Laguna de Quelele. Laguna de Quelele bolstered our list with Boat-billed Heron and Stilt Sandpiper, before we headed to the airport at 10:00. (~50 species, 267 total)

Locations:

ADS - Aquiles de Serdan
CDL - Cruz de Loreto, and adjacent farmland
CO - Cienega de Ojuelos road, just north of LB
LB - La Bascula Road
LQ - Laguna de Quelele, Nayarít
PV - Puerto Vallarta
Ranch - Rancho Primavera
RAM - Río Ameca mouth/Playa de Tomate
WTP - Wastewater Treatment Plant, used for CDL and ADS

Tour highlights are in ALL CAPS; local rarities are underlined; Mexico endemics are denoted with an (E); Regional Endemics (endemic to West Mexico and northern Guatemala/Belize are denoted with an (RE); * = recorded on the Rancho Primavera property; (h) = heard only.

SPECIES LIST (267 species; tour record!)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck* – CDL, LQ, Ranch

Fulvous Whistling-Duck – CDL; 1 at WTP

WOOD DUCK* - Ranch; one male at the Ranch ponds 7 & 11 Jan may be the first record for this part of Mexico, and was certainly a great rarity (and a beautiful bird)!

Gadwall – ADS; one female at the estuary

Blue-winged Teal* – ADS, CDL, LQ, Ranch

Cinnamon Teal – ADS, CDL

Northern Shoveler – ADS, CDL, LQ

Northern Pintail – CDL (1 male)

Green-winged Teal – ADS, LQ; most common at LQ

Ring-necked Duck – PCP; one female

Lesser Scaup – PCP, including one bird with odd reddish tag through the nostrils!

Ruddy Duck – ADS WTP (1); CDL WTP (1)

CRESTED GUAN – near Bioto; three seen well in the scope; it is wonderful that this species has persisted in this area, as it is hunted heavily.

Least Grebe* – CDL, Ranch; Ranch ponds, also Altamira Restaurant

Eared Grebe – PCP; total of 50+

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY – RAM, Tehua; two flew past Tehua 9 Jan; 50 feeding off Río Ameca 6 Jan

Brown Booby – Common along coast

Brown Pelican – Common along coast

Neotropic Cormorant* – Common on freshwater; several on ocean from Tehua and RAM.

Magnificent Frigatebird - Common along coast

American Bittern* – Ranch; one flushed for the Ranch Big Day 11 Jan

BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON* – PCP, CDL; at the Presa, three flew over dam at dawn, and one

perched for scope looks; another was seen at night near the Limpkin spot

Great Blue Heron* – Small numbers most days

Great Egret* – Seen daily

Snowy Egret* – Fairly common, especially near coast

Little Blue Heron* – Several seen regularly at Ranch; others in lowlands near PV and CDL

Tricolored Heron – Several around PV, RAM, and LQ; one seen well at PCP

Reddish Egret – Singles at RAM, ADS, and LQ

Cattle Egret* – Common; seen daily

Green Heron* – Seen daily

Black-crowned Night-Heron* – Small numbers on most days, including several at Ranch.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – 2 immatures at RAM and 5 at LQ seen well

BOAT-BILLED HERON – LQ; one seen well on our final day

White Ibis – RAM, ADS, LQ

White-faced Ibis* – CDL, Ranch, ADS (1); small flock at Ranch ponds

Roseate Spoonbill – ADS; one immature seen from the bridge was our only one!

Wood Stork – CDL, Tehua, nr Juntas Verano; more prevalent this year than most, a large flock circling over

Black Vulture* – Common; seen daily

Turkey Vulture* – Common; seen daily

Osprey* – Seen several days, including one at the Ranch

Hook-billed Kite – Black morph (?) seen near PCP

SNAIL KITE – One immature near the CDL turnoff was a complete shocker and not even on my radar screen!

In fact, while Howell and Webb (1995) show no records nearby, the species has colonized the Manzanillo marshes (Colima) and San Blas (Nayarit) to the south and north, respectively. This may have been Jalisco's first, nonetheless, and was a thrill.

Sharp-shinned Hawk* – Five total including two on Ranch 11 Jan

Cooper's Hawk* – Singles at CDL Jan and Ranch 11 Jan

Common Black-Hawk* – PCP, Ranch; best view was along river at Ranch, where one perched right next to the van one day.

GREAT BLACK-HAWK – Tehua trail; two circling over the Tehua trail were vocal and thus easily identified; we also saw the uppertail pattern well when they banked. My first for the area (and for Mexico)!

Roadside Hawk – CDL (3), one heard at LQ

Broad-winged Hawk* – Ranch; one imm. 7 Jan and one ad. 8 Jan

Gray Hawk* – Our most common raptor, seen almost daily

Short-tailed Hawk* – Total of 9 on 6 dates; both light and dark morphs, including one light morph over the Ranch 8 & 11 Jan, my first there.

Zone-tailed Hawk – PCP, CDL, Altamira Restaurant; four total.

Collared Forest-Falcon* (h) – One-two heard almost daily at Ranch

Crested Caracara* – Tehua, CDL, Ranch; two at Ranch 11 Jan, others near coast

LAUGHING FALCON* – One heard at the Ranch pond 7 Jan was seen well 11 Jan as it flew right over us

American Kestrel* – Common; seen daily

Merlin – one quick flyby near PCP

Bat Falcon* – Ranch; one quick flyover near house on morning of 8 Jan; possibly heard the night prior at ponds

Peregrine Falcon* – PV, CDL, Ranch; singles on four dates, including adult catching bats over the Ranch Ponds on 8 Jan.

Sora* – Ranch, CDL; heard only on Ranch, but seen very well at CDL where a lifer for Diane

Purple Gallinule* – CDL (8); also one on Ranch 8 & 11 Jan

Common Moorhen* – CDL, Ranch (1)

American Coot* – Seen almost daily

LIMPKIN – CDL (2); scoped in spotlight. This species has recently colonized the area and apparently has been seen in the Manzanillo area (Colima) since 1994 and has also reached San Blas in recent years. Are introduced snails to blame?

Black-bellied Plover – RAM (1)

COLLARED PLOVER – RAM (8), ADS (8); great looks in direct comparison to Semipalmated
Snowy Plover – RAM; Amy spotted one in direct comparison with Semipalmateds
Wilson's Plover – RAM; two seen well
Semipalmated Plover – RAM (100), ADS (20)
Killdeer* – ADS WTP (4), Ranch (1 on 11 Jan); Bev spotted our first ones at ADS
American Oystercatcher – Tehua
Black-necked Stilt – RAM, ADS, CDL
American Avocet – RAM (1), LQ
NORTHERN JACANA – CDL, ADS WTP
Spotted Sandpiper – Seen most days
Solitary Sandpiper* – Ranch; one 8 & 11 Jan
Greater Yellowlegs* – Seen several days; one heard over Ranch 11 Jan
Willet – RAM (6), ADS (2); these were subspecies *inornatus*
Whimbrel – RAM (2); American subspecies *hudsonicus*
Marbled Godwit – RAM (1)
Sanderling – RAM (15)
Western Sandpiper – RAM, ADS
Least Sandpiper – RAM, ADS, LQ
Stilt Sandpiper – LQ; about four seen in distance
Long-billed Dowitcher – RAM (10), ADS WTP (1); identification confirmed by call
Wilson's Snipe* – Ranch; 4 on 11 Jan
Laughing Gull – Abundant along coast; 15 at PCP were a surprise to find inland.
FRANKLIN'S GULL – One first-winter at the “Starbucks Canal” in PV 6 Jan
BONAPARTE'S GULL – Three (one adult, 2 first-winters) at RAM were new for the tour. A report from southern Baja suggests this may have been a good year for them in Mexico.
Heerman's Gull – Common along coast, especially Tehua
California Gull – RAM (45) and Tehua (15); higher numbers than usual
Caspian Tern – Singles at RAM and PCP
Common Tern – RAM; one adult 6 Jan was a huge surprise for mid-winter, though one was here last year too!
Forster's Tern – RAM (1)
Royal Tern – RAM, Tehua; small numbers
Rock Pigeon – Common; seen almost daily
Red-billed Pigeon – RAM (3)
White-winged Dove* – seen daily; fairly common in El Tuito area, with flocks in mornings on the Ranch
Mourning Dove* – Surprisingly absent from most areas, they were common around CDL, Puerto Vallarta, and LQ. One seen distantly on the Ranch 11 Jan was my first for the property.
Inca Dove* – Common; seen almost daily
Common Ground-Dove – Common in lowlands only, where seen around Tehua and CDL
Ruddy Ground-Dove* – CDL, Ranch; uncommon
White-tipped Dove* – Fairly common; best seen at PCP, but heard or glimpsed daily
Orange-fronted Parakeet* – Seen most days
MILITARY MACAW* – Distant birds over PCP (2), LB (2), and the Ranch 11 Jan (2); close flyover group of 4 seen near CO on 8 Jan.
MEXICAN PARROTLET – PCP (near; 40), Bucerias (20)
Lilac-crowned Parrot* (E) – Heard and seen by some en route to Tehua; several flocks seen on the evening of 11 Jan. Seemed scarcer than normal this year.
Squirrel Cuckoo* – Tehua, Ranch; good looks on the Tehua trail
LESSER GROUND-CUCKOO* – Tehua, Ranch (h); one of the great highlights of this tour, was having a responsive ground-cuckoo fly in for prolonged scope looks and later drop to the ground a stalk forward no faster than a running sloth! It crept silently on the floor of the thorn forest right up to us before flying across the road and disappearing.
Groove-billed Ani* – Common; seen daily
Barn Owl* – Ranch (h), El Tuito; one seen on our way back from Tehua was just a mile west of El Tuito

(h) **Vermiculated Screech-Owl** – Heard at our secret spot, but not seen
COLIMA PYGMY-OWL (E) – Seen well at our secret owling spot
Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl* – Seen and heard frequently
MOTTLED OWL* – Tehua, Ranch (h); heard nightly at Ranch, but seen phenomenally well at our secret owling spot
Lesser Nighthawk* – Regularly seen at dusk at Ranch and near CDL
Pauraque* – One seen well at Ranch 11 Jan.
Vaux's Swift* – Seen overhead at LB on 7 Jan and over the Ranch 11 Jan
LONG-BILLED (MEXICAN) HERMIT (E) – LB; one at powerline hibiscus flowers 10 Jan, which apparently are a part of its trapline that it visits at 10:30:20 am (it returned for a longer look at 10:40:00). Taxonomy and nomenclature are confusing with this species: the AOU recently (2002) divided *Phaethornis superciliosus* (Long-tailed Hermit) into Middle American *P. longirostris* (Long-billed Hermit) and South American *P. superciliosus* (Rusty-breasted Hermit). Adding to the confusion, Clements calls the *P. longirostris* Western Long-tailed Hermit. The subspecies that we saw, *P. l. griseoventer*, is part of a subspecies group (with *P. l. mexicanus*) that was treated as a species in its own right by Howell and Webb (1995. Birds of Mexico and Central America) and with any luck the AOU and Clements will follow suit and we'll all get a new bird!

Golden-crowned Emerald – Tehua; one female seen near Llano Grande
Broad-billed Hummingbird* – Common; seen daily
Berylline Hummingbird* (RE) – Extremely common at LB, with just a few at Ranch (including Ranch feeders).
Cinnamon Hummingbird* – Very common, but spectacular
Violet-crowned Hummingbird – Tehua; total of 7 on 9 Jan
PLAIN-CAPPED STARTRHOAT – PCP; two cooperative birds near La Presa
Ruby-throated Hummingbird* – Common at Ranch feeders, where easily compared to Black-chinned
Black-chinned Hummingbird* – Common at Ranch feeders
Calliope Hummingbird* – Common on LB, with a female seen by Diane at Ranch 11 Jan
Rufous Hummingbird* – Seen sporadically at Ranch
CITREOLINE TROGON* (E) – One female en route to Tehua and a pair at the Ranch; the latter were my first for the property
RUSSET-CROWNED MOTMOT* (RE) – Seen well at CO and heard on the Ranch
Ringed Kingfisher – One seen well at PCP
Belted Kingfisher* – A few; seen regularly at Ranch and other locales
Green Kingfisher* – At least two seen regularly at Ranch; others at RAM and elsewhere
Acorn Woodpecker* – Common in pines of LB, but also in more tropical vegetation around Ranch and El Tuito
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker* (E) – Common; seen almost daily. This striking endemic woodpecker was a joy to behold.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker* – LB, Ranch; one at LB 8 Jan and one at Ranch 11 Jan, the latter my first on the ranch.
Ladder-backed Woodpecker – Heard on several dates and seen at CO 8 Jan
Arizona Woodpecker – Seen very well at LB 10 Jan
Gray-crowned Woodpecker (E) – Four seen well at CO 8 Jan and one at LB 10 Jan
Lineated Woodpecker* – Seen well en route to Tehua, with its crest brilliant in the morning sun
Pale-billed Woodpecker – Seemed more prevalent than in past years, we had great looks at PCP and CO, with two more at LB; in the genus *Campephilus*, the same genus as Ivory-billed Woodpecker
Ivory-billed Woodcreeper* – One seen near Juntas Verano 8 Jan and two on Ranch 11 Jan
White-striped Woodcreeper (E) – Seen well at LB 10 Jan (and seen poorly at CO 8 Jan)
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet* – This nondescript little flycatcher was seen on several dates and heard on most days
Greenish Elaenia* – 11 on four dates; one on Ranch 10 Jan (leader only)
TUFTED FLYCATCHER – Common at LB and CO

Greater Pewee* – Common; seen daily. Most common in pines of LB, it was also a regular flock component at CO and the Ranch.

Willow Flycatcher* – one at PCP and one at Ranch pond

Least Flycatcher* – The second most-common *Empidonax*, we saw several on the Ranch and elsewhere

Hammond’s Flycatcher – One seen well at LB

Pacific-slope Flycatcher* – The most common *Empidonax*, we saw many at Ranch, Tehua, and elsewhere

Cordilleran Flycatcher – Five on LB, including one that responded to tape

Black Phoebe* – Two at Ranch seen on two dates

EASTERN PHOEBE* – One at the Ranch 11 Jan was a new bird for the area and possibly the first record for the coastal slope of Jalisco

Vermilion Flycatcher* – Common; seen daily. This spectacular species was a treat to see so commonly.

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA* – one seen well en route to Tehua 9 Jan and one heard on Ranch 11 Jan

Dusky-capped Flycatcher* – Common in all forested habitats: Ranch, LB, near Tehua

Ash-throated Flycatcher* – Uncommon, but several near Tehua, PCP, and at Ranch

Nutting’s Flycatcher – Fairly common near Tehua; we had good studies of this species and heard its diagnostic call which eliminates Ash-throated Flycatcher

Brown-crested Flycatcher* – Seen well at PCP and Tehua trail; best for me were two pairs on the Ranch (by the pond and by the pond at the east gate)—my first for the Ranch.

FLAMMULATED FLYCATCHER (E) – Tehua; one seen extremely well at PCP and three more seen en route to Tehua, two of those on the “Tehua Trail”. This is a very difficult bird to see well.

Great Kiskadee* – Common; seen daily

Boat-billed Flycatcher* – Seen well at the entrance to CO

Social Flycatcher* – Common; seen daily.

Tropical Kingbird* – One of the most common birds; seen daily. Roost of 50+ at the ADS WTP!

Thick-billed Kingbird* – Second most common flycatcher; seen daily

Rose-throated Becard – LB, CO, Ranch (leader). This subspecies (*albiventris*) is the same that occurs in Arizona.

MASKED TITYRA* – Common in small numbers and seen on three dates. This plump shrike-like bird is spectacular with its red face and was a nice one to encounter with regularity

Bell’s Vireo – Common in lowlands; these birds seemed very greenish and may have been the *bellii* subspecies, or possibly the slightly duller *arizonae*.

Cassin’s Vireo* – LB (2); one of these birds was bright but the other was exceedingly dull, almost as dull as a Plumbeous (but had some yellow on the vent). One of many good finds by Father Tom.

Plumbeous Vireo – LB, Tehua area; 10 total

Golden Vireo* (E) – Fairly common, with several very close sightings including on the Ranch

Warbling Vireo* – One of the more common flock components

BLACK-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY (E) – Two different mixed flocks en route to Tehua included birds consistent with both species, but many individuals shows signs of hybrid ancestry (e.g., black flecks in a white throat or vice versa). This area is a hybrid zone for these species and even phenotypically pure birds are probably not genetically pure.

WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY – Seen in a mixed flock near the Ranch 10 Jan

Green Jay – LB, Bioto bridge; several seen briefly

San Blas Jay* (E) – Common and seen well at Ranch and environs; also PCP

Common Raven* – Seen well over Juntas Verano, also heard at Ranch 7 Jan (leader).

Gray-breasted Martin – PCP (2)

Mangrove Swallow – PCP (6), Tehua

Northern Rough-winged Swallow* – Common; seen daily

Bank Swallow – 50 over lowlands near Tehua 9 Jan

Barn Swallow* – Groups at CDL and one near Tehua; one at Ranch 11 Jan

Bridled Titmouse – LB; seen near the crest of the road, but not very cooperative; these birds seem darker than the Bridled Titmice that reach the USA.

Happy Wren* (E) – Uncommon, but seen most days on Ranch or elsewhere

Sinaloa Wren* (E) – Common, and seen daily at Tehua, Ranch, and elsewhere

(h) **House Wren*** – One heard on the Ranch Big Day 11 Jan was our only one (usually more common); these were of the northern *aedon* subspecies group, as opposed to the highland “Brown-throated” Wren

White-bellied Wren – Five seen near Tehua

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – Two on LB were expected but one on the Tehua trail may have been my first one in the lowlands of Jalisco

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher* – Common; seen daily. This may have been the most common passerine in mixed flocks.

Black-capped Gnatcatcher (E) – Four were seen (and heard) near Tehua; the male had just a single fleck of black over the eye and the females were distinguishable from Blue-gray only by call.

Eastern Bluebird – Eight on LB

BROWN-BACKED SOLITAIRE (RE) – Two at LB 10 Jan were seen briefly and heard singing their beautiful, cascading bell-like song. This regional endemic sneaks into Guatemala as well.

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH* – Common within Ranch forest; seen well 8 Jan, with even Carool scoring great looks in the spotlight

Swainson’s Thrush* – One on the Ranch 11 Jan was the first I have seen there.

Hermit Thrush – One at LB 10 Jan was the first one I’ve had on a tour here.

White-throated Robin* – A fruiting tree in El Tuito garnered several of these robins for us. Also seen on Ranch 10 & 11 Jan.

Rufous-backed Robin* (E) – Seen most days in small numbers; great looks on Ranch

Northern Mockingbird – ADS WTP, CDL; surprisingly local and not seen on Ranch itself

BLUE MOCKINGBIRD* (E) – Heard almost daily and glimpsed by a few, we finally had good looks at the 11th hour of our 11 Jan Big Day. Good looks in the scope.

Cedar Waxwing* – Missed entirely last year, but this year one was seen and heard over the Ranch on 8 & 11 Jan, one flyover was en route to Tehua, and five were staging to roost with kingbirds at the ADS WTP.

Olive Warbler – One at LB km 15 was the first we have recorded in the area. A dull female, this bird resembled a Pine Warbler. We don’t know if they are regular in small numbers or if this was a stray from higher elevation.

Orange-crowned Warbler* – Common and seen in small numbers most days; those seen included mostly *lutescens*, but with good numbers of *orestera* and perhaps a few that looked like *celata*. Less common than in past years?

Nashville Warbler* – Common; seen daily. This species vied with gnatcatcher as most common mixed-flock passerine.

Tropical Parula – PCP (3) and Tehua (5); subspecies *pulchra*

Yellow Warbler* – Common and seen or heard daily, especially in open areas and lowland areas.

Chestnut-sided Warbler* – Ranch; two together at the river 11 Jan were probably the two birds that I saw in nearby locations 8 Jan. This species is listed as a vagrant only in West Mexico, but I have now seen it six times here.

Yellow-rumped Warbler* – Common, especially in pine forest of LB and in mangos on Ranch; these were all of the “Audubon’s Warbler” subspecies group (*auduboni*)

Black-throated Gray Warbler* – Very common; one of the primary flock components in all habitats

Black-throated Green Warbler – CO (2), LB (1 on 10 Jan)

Townsend’s Warbler – CO (1), LB (1 on 10 Jan)

Yellow-throated Warbler – One in pines LB km 15 on 10 Jan was outside the mapped range, but is the 4th that VENT has recorded in the past three years. It was probably of the *abilora* subspecies, but I did not see it well enough to be sure.

Grace’s Warbler – Common in pine forest of LB and nearby

Black-and-white Warbler* – Common in woodlands

American Redstart* – Small numbers seen most days

Ovenbird* – This secretive species was heard 8 Jan and glimpsed 11 Jan on the Ranch

Northern Waterthrush – RAM, LQ; in mangroves primarily, but we had one near the Limpkin spot at CDL

Louisiana Waterthrush* – Ranch; resident bird seen and heard around one of the Ranch ponds. Another seen near Juntas Verano.

MacGillivray’s Warbler* – Very common in brushy and weedy habitats

Common Yellowthroat* – Very common in brushy and weedy habitats

Gray-crowned Yellowthroat – Interestingly, this was the first I have encountered on this tour. It is usually a widespread bird but is scarce here for some reason. One above Llano Grande 9 Jan en route to Tehua.

Wilson's Warbler* – Very common in forested and brushy habitats

Painted Redstart – Very common in pine forest of LB and CO

FAN-TAILED WABLER* – One on LB 10 Jan was the first I have successfully showed to a group on this tour! They can be very sneaky but this responsive bird gave great looks! Two more heard on the Ranch 11 Jan.

Rufous-capped Warbler* – Good looks on several dates, especially on LB and CO; leader only on Ranch 10 Jan

Yellow-breasted Chat – CDL, ADS; the western subspecies *auricollis*

RED-BREASTED CHAT (E) – This spectacular thorn-forest specialty was a definite tour highlight. We had two very responsive adult males en route to Tehua, with one pausing for long scope looks! Another female at the entrance to Tehua trail made for a record total of 3!

ROSY-THRUSH-TANAGER* – This bird tested our skills in the dark forest, but we finally had a male out for scope views that were illuminated by a spotlight. Good views had by all—a Carol bird! A great experience!

Hepatic Tanager – Common in pine forest of LB

Summer Tanager* – Uncommon on ranch and nearby

Western Tanager – Common at PCP and CDL; also near Juntas Verano and Tehua.

FLAME-COLORED TANAGER – Vibrant in the morning light! One at LB was between town and the ridge and was a new bird for the area for me! Another Carol bird!

Blue-black Grassquit* – Seen on three dates, best on near CDL.

White-collared Seedeater* – We saw this little sprite well on several days, including adult males at the Ranch; note that this subspecies (*torqueola*), sometimes known as “**Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater**”, has been granted full-species status by some and is a possible future split.

Olive Sparrow – Very cooperative pair seen en route to Tehua.

Stripe-headed Sparrow* – This common but striking species was seen almost daily

RUSTY SPARROW – We had great looks at this large sparrow at the CO entrance

Chipping Sparrow – Several seen with the bluebirds along LB; tour first for me!

Lark Sparrow* – CDL (30)

Grasshopper Sparrow – One at CDL 10 Jan

Lincoln's Sparrow* – Fairly common in brushy habitats at Ranch and elsewhere

Grayish Saltator* – Common in open areas around Ranch and elsewhere

YELLOW GROSBEAK* (RE) – One male at PCP 7 Jan and one male at Ranch 8 Jan; the subspecies we saw was nominate *chrysopeplus*, which forms a subspecies group with northwestern Mexican *dilutus*; a disjunct form *aurantiacus* occurs in southern Mexico (Chiapas) and Guatemala. The AOU (1998) and Clements (2000) both consider South American forms (*chrysogaster* and *laubmanni*) to be a distinct species, the Golden-bellied Grosbeak (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*).

Black-headed Grosbeak – One near Juntas Verano 7 Jan and one at the Ranch for our 11 Jan Big Day.

Blue Bunting* (RE) – Multiples seen at PCP and near Tehua; also on Ranch 11 Jan; this species ranges from Mexico south to Nicaragua.

Blue Grosbeak* – Common in lowlands of CDL and LQ; 10 on Ranch 11 Jan

ORANGE-BREASTED BUNTING (E) – We had unbelievable views of males (and females) along the road to Tehua.

Varied Bunting* – Fairly common in brushy habitats

Painted Bunting – Stunning males and distinctive green females seen on several dates; the bright males were nothing compared to the male Orange-breasteds (sorry Diane!).

Dickcissel – Groups seen well in the grasslands of CDL; heard at LQ

Red-winged Blackbird – CDL; 60 on 8 Jan and one 10 Jan

Eastern Meadowlark – CDL

Great-tailed Grackle – Common; seen daily. Three on the Ranch 11 Jan were my first for the property!

Bronzed Cowbird – ADS, CDL, Nuevo Vallarta

Brown-headed Cowbird – CDL

Black-vented Oriole* (RE) – Pair at Ranch were seen on several dates

Orchard Oriole* – Seen well on several days; Father Tom had one on the Ranch for our 11 Jan big day.

Hooded Oriole* – Small numbers seen on 3 dates, including several on the Ranch

Streak-backed Oriole* – Common and seen daily, but a magnificent bird

Bullock's Oriole* – Small numbers on four dates, including several on LB/CO and one on the Ranch 11 Jan

Baltimore Oriole* – Single bird 11 Jan

Yellow-winged Cacique* – Common and seen daily, but a magnificent bird; flock of 40+ roosted near Ranch ponds

Scrub Euphonia* – A few seen near near Tehua and heard on the Ranch; the West Mexican form (*godmani*) is sometimes known as “**Godman's Euphonia**” and is considered a possible split. Euphonias are spectacular and (very) cute goldfinch-like birds, and their relationships recently have been revised and they are now thought to be closer to finches than to tanagers

RED CROSSBILL – Four sitting in a dead pine atop the ridge at LB were a new bird for the area; these were very large-billed birds, presumably consistent with “Type 6” (*L. c. stricklandi*), the largest-billed and largest form in North America, specializing on Apache Pines and Ponderosa Pines (in Arizona). If crossbills are ever split, this is probably the only breeding form in western Mexico.

Black-headed Siskin (RE) – Fairly common in pine forest of LB, and stunning when seen well

Lesser Goldfinch* – Seen around Ranch and El Tuito on several dates; these were all of the black-backed form

House Sparrow – Common in towns, including El Tuito

Leader only: West Mexican Chachalaca, Black-capped Vireo (one on Ranch 8 Jan), Hooded Warbler (one on Ranch 10 Jan), Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow

MAMMALS

Bat sp. – Several different species were surely present; none identifiable to species

Common Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*) – One seen between the Ranch and town 9 Jan on our way back from Tehua. A new mammal for me in Mexico, the identification is somewhat presumptive; we separated it from Virginia Opossum primarily by its dingier pelage.

Mexican Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus aureogaster*) – Several sightings of a very large, long-tailed, gray squirrel at LB and the Ranch 11 Jan.

REPTILES

American Crocodile – One seen on our first day at RAM

Black Iguana – Big one seen en route to Tehua

Green Iguana – One ran across the road at PCP and another in one of the Nuevo Vallarta resorts

Jalisco Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon chimalhuaca*) – Two loved their favorite rock on the Ranch; identification is presumptive based on some web research, but I don't think any other species overlap in range.

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta*) – One large one seen at the PV Golf Course on 6 Jan

Mediterranean Gecko – Also known as House Gecko, there were several residents in our various cabins

Other lizards – Other lizards seen included several *Anolis* Anoles, *Cnemidophorus* whiptails, and small *Sceloporus* lizards, not identified to species, as well as a large, collared spiny lizard (also *Sceloporus*) around the houses.

Spiny Lizard sp. (*Sceloporus* sp.) – Several large, collared *Sceloporus* lizards made their home around the cabins. Amy was privileged enough to see a battle to the near-death with her resident “Mr. Stumpy” and an out-of-cabin intruder.

Snake sp. – One brown, stripy snake seen by Becky at the Ranch

BUTTERFLIES (68+ species)*

*one found dead, and 8+ not certainly identified to species

Best year ever for butterflies, thanks to the wet fall. We were also able to identify many more this year than in past years. Nomenclature follows the on-line list of Mexican Butterflies by Jeffrey Glassberg (<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabast/MexEngNames.htm>). Nomenclature for butterflies is variable depending on the author, but this provides a standardized list that concurs with NABA (North American Butterfly Association) nomenclature in the USA. Those marked with an asterisk are the ones I'm sure at least one participant saw, but note that this list includes some of my personal notes from 5 Jan. (ph) = photographed; cf. = tentative ID

SWALLOWTAILS

Battus polydamas* **Polydamas Swallowtail – A few seen (e.g., 4 at PCP), including one near Llano Grande 9 Jan

*cf. *Papilio pharnaces* **Pink-spotted Swallowtail** – One on LB 5 Jan (ph); possibly others at PCP

Papilio cresphontes/thaos **Giant/Thaos Swallowtail** – One at PCP (ph)

WHITES AND SULPHURS

cf. *Eurema dina* **Dina Yellow** – Small bright yellows seen nr Juntas Verano, Tehua Trail, and elsewhere were probably this species, rather than Mimosa Yellow or Little Yellow. A couple seen on the Ranch.

Enantia sp. **Mimic-White sp.** – Two (ph) on LB 5 Jan. Like Costa-spotted Mimic-white (*E. albania*) but with more dark below, including reddish-brown patches at the tips to HW and FW.

Appias drusilla* **Florida White – Fairly common, especially at PCP and Tehua.

Ganyra josephina* **Giant White – Fairly common, especially near Tehua. Also five on LB 5 Jan.

Anteos clorinde* **White Angled-Sulphur – Two seen on the Tehua trail.

Anteos maerula* **Yellow Angled-Sulphur – Six on the Tehua trail.

Phoebis sennae* **Cloudless Sulphur – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies.

Phoebis philea* **Orange-barred Sulphur – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies especially in the bougainvillea on the Ranch.

Phoebis agarithe* **Large Orange Sulphur – 10+ in the Tehua area 9 Jan.

Eurema daira* **Barred Yellow – Perhaps the most abundant butterfly, hundreds could be seen in open grassy areas as at the Ranch.

Eurema mexicana **Mexican Yellow** – Uncommon in forested areas (e.g., 15 on LB 5 Jan, two at PCP)

HAIRSTREAKS AND BLUES

Strymon albata* **White Scrub-Hairsreak – Fairly common around CDL 5 Jan.

Panhiades bathildis* **Zebra Cross-Streak – One (ph) on the Ranch 11 Jan was a major bugging highlight!

Leptotes cassius* **Cassius Blue – One near Tehua (gnatcatcher bend) 9 Jan

Leptotes marina* **Marine Blue – Fairly common, with several seen on LB 5 Jan, and others at Ranch 7 Jan and Tehua 9 Jan.

Hemiargus ceraunus* **Ceraunus Blue – Fairly common, with several seen on Ranch 7 Jan and Tehua 9 Jan. Also at Altamira Restaurant 11 Jan.

Hemiargus isola* **Reakirt's Blue – Several mudpuddling on the Ranch 7 Jan (ph).

Everes comyntas **Eastern Tailed-Blue** – One mudpuddling on the Ranch 7 Jan (ph).

METALMARKS

Rhetus arcus **Sword-tailed Beautymark** – I had two mudpuddling along LB 5 Jan. Known as Arcius Swordtail in Garwood and Lehman (2004). Absolutely stunning!

Melanis pixe* **Red-bordered Pixie – Fairly common, especially at PCP (50) and the Tehua Trail (20); beautiful (ph)

Melanis cephise* **White-rayed Pixie – Seen at CDL and again at en route to Tehua 9 Jan.

Emesis emesia* **Curve-winged Metalmark – One seen on the side road near Juntas Verano 8 Jan.

Calephelis sp. **metalmark sp.** – At least one seen on LB 5 Jan

BRUSHFOOTS

- **Agraulis vanillae* **Gulf Fritillary** – Uncommon throughout.
- Dione moneta* **Mexican Silverspot** – One mudpuddling on the Ranch 8 Jan was the only one.
- **Dryas iulia* **Julia Heliconian** – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies.
- **Heliconius charithonia* **Zebra Heliconian** – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies.
- **Euptoieta hegesia* **Mexican Fritillary** – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies.
- **Chlosyne hippodrome* **Simple Patch** – One (ph) on the side road near Juntas Verano 8 Jan.
- **Phyciodes tulcis* **Pale-banded Crescent** – Uncommon, found in open areas
- **Phyciodes ptolyca* **Black Crescent** – Uncommon, more likely in forested areas
- **Castilia griseobasalis* **Gray-based Crescent** – Common just before the river at the Ranch (ph), but not seen elsewhere. Mayan Crescent (*C. maya*) presumably eliminated by range.
- **Junonia genoveva* **Tropical Buckeye** – Uncommon throughout; at least 8 seen in road on LB 5 Jan. These are all of the *nigrosuffusia* form.
- Anartia jatrophae* **White Peacock** – One near Tehua (gnatcatcher bend) 9 Jan
- **Anartia fatima* **Banded Peacock** – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies.
- **Siproeta stelenes* **Malachite** – Several seen on the Tehua day.
- **Adelpha fessonia* **Band-celled Sister** – A couple identified at PCP; many other *Adelpha* sp. sisters were seen but not identified.
- **Myscelia ethusa* **Mexican Bluewing** – One seen on the Tehua trail, but it was only a quick flyby
- **Eunica monima* **Dingy Purplewing** – Common throughout; one of the most common butterflies, especially on LB
- Biblis hyperia* **Red Rim** – One seen on LB 5 Jan.
- **Hamadryas februa* **Gray Cracker** – One (ph) on the Tehua trail 9 Jan.
- Hamadryas guatemalena* **Guatemalan Cracker** – One (ph) on LB 5 Jan.
- **Smyrna blomfieldia* **Blomfield's Beauty** – Two (ph) on LB 5 Jan and one there 10 Jan.
- **Marpesia chiron* **Many-banded Daggerwing** – Seen several times, especially well on the Tehua Trail 9 Jan (ph)
- **Marpesia petreus* **Ruddy Daggerwing** – Seen several times, especially well at the Maito estero 9 Jan
- **Archaeoprepona demophoon* **Two-spotted Prepona** – One found injured on the Ranch 8 Jan. The first Prepona I've ever identified to species!
- **Doxocopa laure* **Silver Emperor** – Great looks at several mudpuddling below PCP.
- **Opsiphanes invirae* **Lowland Owlet** – This was the butterfly we found perched under the canopy at Cande's Restaurant at Tehua 9 Jan (ph); it was orange above with intricate spots below.
- **Morpho polyphemus* **White Morpho** – Large white butterflies seen at PCP and Tehua (~10 total) (ph).
- **Greta morgane* **Thick-tipped Greta** – Two clearwings seen on the Ranch 11 Jan (ph Amy McD) were apparently this species; a list by Wanda Dameron for the Puerto Vallarta area lists this as the only clearwing species.
- **Danaus plexippus* **Monarch** – Uncommon, but more prevalent than in past years at LB, Tehua, PCP, etc. (ph)
- **Danaus gilippus* **Queen** – A few seen near Tehua.

SKIPPERS

- **Elbella scylla* **Steely Firetip** – One found dead (ph) on Ranch 7 Jan.
- Spathilepia clonius* **Falcate Skipper** – One (ph) on LB 5 Jan.
- **Chioides catillus* **White-striped Longtail** – One (ph) at the Botanical Gardens 10 Jan.
- **Urbanus dorantes* **Dorantes Longtail** – Common throughout (ph). Also some greenish-tinged longtails which could have been *Urbanus proteus* (Long-tailed Skipper) or any of several other possibilities.
- **Astrartes fulgurator* **Two-barred Flasher** – Common (ph) at PCP.
- Astrartes anaphus* **Yellow-tipped Flasher** – Uncommon at PCP; a few seen elsewhere.
- *cf. *Achalarus toxeus* **Coyote Cloudywing** – One nectaring on Ranch 7 Jan (ph).
- **Mylon maimon* **Black-veined Mylon** – One (ph) near Juntas Verno 8 Jan.
- **Achlyodes mithridates* **Sickle-winged Skipper** – Uncommon at PCP and a few scattered ones elsewhere.
- **Pyrgus oileus* **Tropical Checkered-Skipper** – Uncommon throughout. I did not attempt to identify *Pyrgus* but believe most or all were this species.

***Heliopetes macaira* Turk's-cap White-Skipper** – One (ph) on LB 8 Jan.

****Hylephila phyleus* Fiery Skipper** – Several identified at the Bontanical Gardens 10 Jan.

****Panoquina sylvicola* Purple-washed Skipper** – One seen at LB 5 Jan and one (ph) at the Bontanical Gardens 10 Jan.

cf. *Panoquina ocola* Ocola Skipper – One (ph) at LB 5 Jan.

Other forms not identified included a couple small dark spreadwing skippers, a largeish skipper like an *Aguna*, several longtails including ones resembling Long-tailed Skipper and Brown Longtail,

DRAGONFLIES

A few noteworthy ones

***Orthemis discolor* Orange-bellied Skimmer** – The large, red-bodied species that was probably the most common dragonfly

***Orthemis ferruginea* Roseate Skimmer** – One seen over a pond

***Dythemis sterilis* Brown Setwing** – Abundant at PCP

***Pantales flavescens* Wandering Glider** – Common in open areas

***Pantales hymenaea* Spot-winged Glider** – Several seen in open areas