



Field Guides Tour Report

Lesser Antilles 2019

Mar 28, 2019 to Apr 13, 2019

Jesse Fagan

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.



The eastern coastline of St. Vincent. This drive took us from our hotel up to the La Soufriere Volcano, where we had a nice hike for Whistling Warbler. Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.

It's no small feat to finish a Lesser Antilles tour. Ten islands, 16 days, 29 Lesser Antillean endemics (which includes many one-island endemics), and a host of interesting Caribbean birds. This tour takes stamina and some good logistics. I hadn't been back to the islands since 2016, so it was interesting to see that some things change (post-Irma and post-Maria), but some things don't (like "island time"). However, we had a very successful tour, observing all the LA endemics, along with some cool vagrants which included Eurasian Spoonbill (Barbados), Black-headed Gull (a first record for Grenada), and Yellow-throated Vireo on Montserrat (a first island record). I want to thank my group and all our local support, which included (too many to mention by name here!) hotel staff and drivers from all the islands. Thanks for choosing Field Guides Inc. and we look forward to another adventure sometime soon. All the best birding,

Jesse aka Motmot (from Lima, Peru)

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

WEST INDIAN WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arborea*) – A group of 11 or so were seen at McKinnon's Salt Pond on Antigua.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – Large groups seen on Antigua at McKinnon's Salt Pond.

WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL (*Anas bahamensis*) – One on Barbuda and good numbers on Antigua.

MASKED DUCK (*Nomonyx dominicus*) – A real treat (especially for Lois), was seeing this rare and enigmatic species, a female tucked into the water hyacinth, on Guadeloupe.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – A female was seen on Barbuda, but large numbers including breeding males were on Antigua.

Numididae (Guineafowl)

HELMETED GUINEAFOWL (*Numida meleagris*) – A pair running away from our van on Barbuda. They are feral here. [I]

Podicipedidae (Grebes).

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Good numbers at Barrage de Gaschet on Grande Terre, Guadeloupe.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Most islands in cities and towns. [I]

SCALY-NAPED PIGEON (*Patagioenas squamosa*) – Seen on most islands, on Barbados a city bird, but on other islands, like Dominica, more of a forest bird.

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – On the northern Lesser Antilles islands like Barbuda and Antigua.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Common on many islands in LA. [I]

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Also very common and widespread in LA.

RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE (MARTINIQUE) (*Geotrygon montana martinica*) – This subspecies includes the island of St. Vincent where we saw this bird.

BRIDLED QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon mystacea*) – Incredible scope views on the island of Guadeloupe at Chuts du Carbet.

GRENADA DOVE (*Leptotila wellsi*) – Great looks at a perched bird in the steep dry forest at Mt. Hartmann. [E]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Small numbers on Barbuda.

ZENAIDA DOVE (*Zenaida aurita*) – Common on all the islands.

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata stenura*) – Common on Barbados and Grenada, just in the extreme southern islands of LA.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Several on Grenada were cooperative, but again on other islands.

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – Fairly common throughout LA. We saw them well on several islands, but always in the canopy.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies).

RUFOUS NIGHTJAR (ST. LUCIA) (*Antrostomus rufus otiosus*) – Wonderful looks at dusk in the dry forest of St. Lucia. A potential split in the future.

Apodidae (Swifts).

SHORT-TAILED SWIFT (*Chaetura brachyura*) – Good numbers had arrived to St. Vincent and a small group was seen over the town of St. Pierre, which appears to be a recent range expansion.

LESSER ANTILLEAN SWIFT (*Chaetura martinica*) – Seen on St. Vincent, but our best looks were low flying birds on Dominica.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds).

RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT (*Glaucis hirsutus*) – Visiting the heliconia flowers at Grande Etang on Grenada. This is the only Caribbean island where this species is found.

PURPLE-THROATED CARIB (*Eulampis jugularis*) – More restricted than the next species, but still seen well many times on several islands.

GREEN-THROATED CARIB (*Eulampis holosericeus*) – Fairly common throughout the LA.

BLUE-HEADED HUMMINGBIRD (*Cyanophaea bicolor*) – Unfortunately, there were lots of open areas and flowers on Dominica (post Hurricane Maria), so birds were spreading out and less localized to certain patches of flowers. Regardless, we saw a couple of individuals briefly.

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (LESSER ANTILLES) (*Orthorhyncus cristatus exilis*) – The individuals on Grenada had blue tips to the crest feathers, further north the crests are all green.

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (ST. VINCENT) (*Orthorhyncus cristatus ornatus*)

ANTILLEAN CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD (GRENADINES AND GRENADA) (*Orthorhyncus cristatus emigrans*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

COMMON GALLINULE (AMERICAN) (*Gallinula galeata cerceris*) – Seen a few times.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – "Caribbean" Coots with all white foreshields are now shown to be a southern morph of this species. A few seen on Antigua.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A group of 20 were seen at McKinnon's Salt Ponds on Antigua.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings).

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Good numbers at Congo Swamp Road on Barbados and again on Antigua.

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) – One was at Congo Swamp Road Shooting Ponds. A bird that has been seen off and on over the last two years.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Small numbers on Barbados.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies).

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Small numbers on Barbados and Grenada.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – A small group of three individuals were at Congo Swamp Road.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – A pair in the mangroves on Grenada.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*)

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*) – Semipalmated and Western were feeding together in the shallow ponds at Congo Swamp Road, Barbados. Semis, however, were far more numerous.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – One on Barbados.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Singles on several islands.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – One was in a small pond on Barbuda.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Large numbers on Barbados (where they pass by the tens of thousands) and again on Antigua.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Also large numbers on Barbados and Antigua.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Appears to be a first record for Grenada.

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Most islands and most in full black-hooded breeding plumage.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*) – A first-cycle bird on Grenada appears to be a first record for the island.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Small numbers in the southern LA, but more common further north.

Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)

WHITE-TAILED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon lepturus*) – A rare bird for Barbados. One was with a mixed group of Red-billeds at a breeding colony.

RED-BILLED TROPICBIRD (*Phaethon aethereus*)

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – We visited Codrington Lagoon on Barbuda where we saw several thousand. This is the largest breeding colony in the Western Hemisphere.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

BROWN BOOBY (*Sula leucogaster*) – Good numbers on Grenada.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Seen on most of the middle and northern LA islands.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Small numbers on several islands.

LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – One pure blood was seen on Barbados.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Small numbers on Barbados and further north.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Small numbers on several islands.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – Just one on Antigua.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Most islands. The Caribbean was the approach north for this species' expansion into North America.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Good numbers on several islands including Grenada.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – One on Antigua.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – A pair were seen on St. Vincent.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Rare to uncommon in LA. We saw two individuals foraging on the McKinnon's Salt Ponds.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*) – A vagrant to LA. One was around at the Congo Swamp Road Shooting Ponds.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – One on Martinique was the resident subspecies, ridgwayi.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

HOOK-BILLED KITE (GRENADA) (*Chondrohierax uncinatus mirus*) – The resident Hook-billed Kite on Grenada is a potential "good" split. We had nice perched scope views at Mt. Hartmann.

COMMON BLACK HAWK (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) – Several seen on St. Vincent; the only island in the Caribbean where this species is found.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus insulicola*) – The B. platypterus on Antigua.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus rivierei*) – St. Lucia to Guadeloupe.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (CARIBBEAN) (*Buteo platypterus antillarum*) – Barbados, Grenada, and St. Vincent.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (LESSER ANTILLES) (*Tyto alba insularis*) – The Lesser Antilles Owl was seen super well on Grenada where a pair approached close over our heads.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – Winter birds on Dominica.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

GADELOUPE WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes herminieri*) – The only LA woodpecker is endemic to Guadeloupe. We had a pair close to our hotel. [E]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (EASTERN CARIBBEAN) (*Falco sparverius caribaeorum*) – Small numbers on Barbuda and Antigua where resident.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – One on St. Vincent.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

RED-NECKED PARROT (*Amazona arausiaca*) – The most common endemic parrot on Dominica, but there seemed to be fewer numbers (post Maria), than in year's past. [E]

ST. LUCIA PARROT (*Amazona versicolor*) – Seen pretty well from our overlook at Des Cartier's Trail. [E]

IMPERIAL PARROT (*Amazona imperialis*) – Wow. Very satisfactory views of a calling bird perched across the ravine from us. We put the scope on it. One of the hardest LA endemics to see. [E]

ST. VINCENT PARROT (*Amazona guildingii*) [E]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

CARIBBEAN ELAENIA (*Elaenia martinica*) – Common on most islands.

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – Seen on Grenada, its only island in the Caribbean.
LESSER ANTILLEAN PEWEE (*Contopus latirostris*) – Good numbers in the dry forest on St. Lucia.
GRENADA FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus nugator*) – Not just on Grenada! Seen on Grenada and St. Vincent.
LESSER ANTILLEAN FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus oberi*) – This species became more common after Dominica.
GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – Seen on all the islands, everyday.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Possibly, the first record for Montserrat.
BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO (*Vireo altiloquus*) – Our first was on Grenada, but after that we encountered them on all the islands. Resident birds are supplemented with Northern Caribbean birds who winter here.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

CARIBBEAN MARTIN (*Progne dominicensis*) – Seen a few times: Barbados, Martinique, and Dominica.
BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A few on Martinique.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (DOMINICA) (*Troglodytes aedon rufescens*) – The House Wrens on the four islands are all quite different in appearance and song. They definitely deserve species status in my opinion.
HOUSE WREN (ST. LUCIA) (*Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus*)
HOUSE WREN (ST. VINCENT) (*Troglodytes aedon musicus*) [*]
HOUSE WREN (GRENADA) (*Troglodytes aedon grenadensis*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUFOUS-THROATED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes genibarbis*) – A lovely songster and seen well in the scope on St. Lucia.
SPECTACLED THRUSH (*Turdus nudigenis*) – Good looks on several islands including Grenada and St. Vincent.
FOREST THRUSH (*Turdus lherminieri*) – Spectacular looks on Guadeloupe at a bird foraging within a few feet of us! Best looks ever.
RED-LEGGED THRUSH (ARDOSIACEUS/ALBIVENTRIS) (*Turdus plumbeus albiventris*) – Several feeding on the road on Dominica. This subspecies appears to be closely related to birds from Puerto Rico. The theory is that they were brought to the island as pets by native indigenous people.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

WHITE-BREASTED THRASHER (*Ramphocinclus brachyurus*) – Awesome looks at a pair foraging in the leaf litter at Prequile La Caravelle.
SCALY-BREASTED THRASHER (*Allenia fusca*) – One singing at the top of an exposed tree on St. Vincent was memorable. More common than the next species.
PEARLY-EYED THRASHER (*Margarops fuscatus*) – Seen just a few times.
BROWN TREMBLER (*Cinclocerthia ruficauda*) – The tremblers are a bizarre group of birds. Both species are confined to the Lesser Antilles. Gray Trembler is the more limited-range species. We saw both nicely, including the "trembling."
GRAY TREMBLER (*Cinclocerthia gutturalis*)
TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – Seen on several islands.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

ST. LUCIA ORIOLE (*Icterus laudabilis*) – This species gave us a bit of trouble. We finally caught up with it in the dry forest. [E]
MONTSERRAT ORIOLE (*Icterus oberi*) – A family group which included several young birds were seen very well on the forest trail near Baker Hill. [E]
MARTINIQUE ORIOLE (*Icterus bonana*) – We witnessed some really neat foraging behavior as a male stripped bark from tree in search of small prey items. [E]
SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – Small numbers throughout all the islands.
CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris guadeloupensis*) – The Carib Grackles differ in body size, tail length, and female color. Generally, speaking the females become grayer as you move north. Body size and tail also increases as you move north. This subspecies was seen from Guadeloupe north.
CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris inflexirostris*) – St. Lucia
CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris contrusus*) – St. Vincent
CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris lutosus*) – Grenada
CARIB GRACKLE (*Quiscalus lugubris fortirostris*) – Barbados.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – One on Montserrat.
WHISTLING WARBLER (*Catharopeza bishopi*) – We heard it only at Vermont Natural Trails, but our Plan B at La Soufriere worked out nicely! [E]
PLUMBEOUS WARBLER (*Setophaga plumbea*) – Seen on Guadeloupe and again on Dominica.
AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – A pair on Montserrat.
NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Good numbers on Montserrat.
YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia bartholemica*)
YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia melanopectera*)
YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia ruficapilla*) – The most distinctive form was this one found on Martinique with mostly rufous heads (looking more like "Mangrove" Yellow Warblers).
YELLOW WARBLER (GOLDEN) (*Setophaga petechia petechia*)
BARBUDA WARBLER (*Setophaga subita*) – Thankfully, post-Irma the endemic warbler is still going strong. [E]
ST. LUCIA WARBLER (*Setophaga delicata*) – Seen well at Des Cartiers Nature Trail and again in the dry forest. [E]

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies).

LESSER ANTILLEAN TANAGER (*Tangara cucullata*) – Lots at Grande Etang on the island of Grenada. One was seen briefly on St. Vincent, too.

GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH (*Sicalis luteola*) – Several fly-overs while on Barbados.

BANANAQUIT (LESSER ANTILLEAN) (*Coereba flaveola bartholemica*) – The Bananaquits all differed slightly from island to island. One distinctive form were the all black ones found on Grenada and St. Vincent.

BANANAQUIT (LESSER ANTILLEAN) (*Coereba flaveola martinicana*)

BANANAQUIT (LESSER ANTILLEAN) (*Coereba flaveola barbadensis*)

BANANAQUIT (ST. VINCENT) (*Coereba flaveola atrata*)

BANANAQUIT (GRENADA) (*Coereba flaveola aterrima*)

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris bicolor*) – Common on all the islands.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis coryi*) – The bullfinches between islands differed in the amount of red on the face and undertails coverts. Also, the subspecies 'coryi' on Antigua and Barbuda has a more grayish wash and appears smaller.

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis ridgwayi*)

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis dominicana*)

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis noctis*)

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis sclateri*)

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis crissalis*)

LESSER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla noctis grenadensis*)

BARBADOS BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla barbadensis*) – Very little or no sexual dimorphism. Both sexes look like female Lesser Antillean Bullfinches. Common on the island. [E]

ST. LUCIA BLACK FINCH (*Melanospiza richardsoni*) – Always tough. We dug one out in the last 45 minutes of daylight. Awesome looks! [E]

LESSER ANTILLEAN SALTATOR (*Saltator albicollis*) – Seen well on St. Lucia.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows).

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Just on Grenada. [I]

MAMMALS

BRAZILIAN FREE-TAILED BAT (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) – Small bats seen at dusk on Grenada.

MONA MONKEY (*Cercopithecus mona*) – A pair were friendly at Grande Etang on Grenada. [I]

SMALL ASIAN MONGOOSE (*Herpestes javanicus*) – Seen a couple of times on St. Vincent. [I]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Of the many island lizards we looked at, from my photos I was able to identify three species:

- 1) Grenada Tree Anole (*Anolis richardii*)
 - 2) Saint Vincent Bush Anole (*Anolis trinitatis*)
 - 3) Dominican Anole (*Anolis oculatus*)
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Totals for the tour: 145 bird taxa and 3 mammal taxa