

# Oaxaca Birding Trip Report

By Stephen & Sandra Brauning ([stevebrauning@yahoo.com](mailto:stevebrauning@yahoo.com))

MARCH 2017						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
We traveled to Oaxaca in March 2017 from our home in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, for a birding trip, eager to increase our Mexico life list. Our time was limited to one week, after which we had a retreat at a beach resort in Puerto Escondido.			<b>8</b> Depart SDQ 12:43PM Jet Blue via San Juan and Ft. Lauderdale Arrive MEX @ 11:05PM, stay at Fiesta Inn next to the airport.	<b>9</b> Depart MEX 8:55AM Interjet to Huatulco arrive 10:05AM, p/u Europcar rental, Drive to Huatulco National Park  PM: Drive to Cabañas La Puesta del Sol, San José del Pacífico (4 hrs)	<b>10</b> Bird the highway south of San Jose: >San Pedro el Alto (go 3 km), El Mirador, La Soledad.	<b>11</b> Bird the highway south of San Jose again, going a little further: Mirador, La Soledad,
<b>12</b> Travel to Oaxaca City Birding on way Check in at Casa Adobe B&B PM: Birding on Rt. 175 N to Garbage gulch and black tank area.	<b>13</b> AM: Teotitlan del valle PM: Yagul ruins	<b>14</b> Leave by 5:30AM to: La Cumbre trip (Rt. 175N), all day.	<b>15</b> Leave by 5:30AM to: Etla-Guacamayo PM: Monte Albán ruins	<b>16</b> AM: Depart for Puerto Escondido no later than 10AM	<b>17</b> Hotel, Puerto Escondido	<b>18</b> Hotel, Puerto Escondido (through Tuesday)

## **Introduction:**

This trip came about since we were invited to attend a retreat in Puerto Escondido, a resort town on the coast of Oaxaca, and knowing that there were many endemic bird species and West Mexico specialties that we had not seen, we planned this birding week before the retreat.

Both of us are very avid birders, and having lived for many years and traveled extensively in Latin America, we've birded a lot of places. Our approach to birding trips is to research and plan everything ourselves. We like to get the maximum number of species and lifers, of course, but are realistic in that if we don't get local or professional guides, we'll miss some birds. But we are not satisfied with a guide telling us "that's a .....", and "ticking" it off the list. We like the challenge of finding the birds ourselves on our own time-frame. Plus we are looking for economy, and since we speak Spanish, we can negotiate the logistics and enjoy the contacts with locals. With a life list of over 2,200 species of birds, all in the Americas, we are pretty confident in being able to handle the birds.

As far as our experience in Mexico and with Mexican birds, we have traveled together to Mexico eight times, including an extensive birding trip to the neighboring state of Chiapas two years before. We honeymooned there, and several of our trips were bird-focused, including a week birding in Mexico City in 2016. Steve has made about four other trips, including having lived in the Yucatan peninsula for almost a year back in the '80s. Along with our other travels in the neo-tropics, we knew that we would see quite a few familiar species. We really only had seven days for birding, which meant that we would have to concentrate on central Oaxaca, and not go very far either east or west, meaning we would miss a few birds. But it was an enjoyable trip and very productive, bird-wise.

## **Preparations:**

We were able to do all our bookings and reservations on-line: flights, of course, hotels mostly on Booking.com, some on Expedia, and rental cars mostly on [www.economycarrentals.com](http://www.economycarrentals.com). We did not hire any guides since they seemed very expensive. On guide who seems very good is Eric Antonio Martinez, and he would be a good option. He is available on Facebook and by e-mail [mirmidons\\_1987@yahoo.com](mailto:mirmidons_1987@yahoo.com). But he wasn't available on the only days that we could have met him, and we definitely missed out on some species by not having him along or hiring a guide, but we stuck with the plan.

*The Birds of Mexico and North Central America* is the old standard field guide by Steven Howell, published by Oxford University Press in 1995, with 1010 pages. It is an important resource, although a little dated, very large and heavy, and it does not illustrate any migratory birds. We brought it along but generally did not carry in the field. We had the pocket field guide, Ber Van Perlo's *Birds of Mexico and Central America*, a Princeton Illustrated Checklist, published in 2006, which fits in the pocket but suffers from the opposite limitations: it's so small, that illustrations and maps tiny and information is minimal. Using both books was helpful. We also downloaded many of the bird songs, especially the Oaxaca endemics, from xeno canto.

## **Overall impressions of Mexico and Oaxaca, logistics, and birding:**

Mexico is such a large and diverse country with about 1,100 species of birds recorded, of which about 110 are endemic (according to Avibase – others list different numbers). The country hosts many other ne-tropical species as well, and many migrants from North American winter and/or pass through. It is large and diverse enough that it deserves many trips to really cover well.

Oaxaca is the state with the highest number of bird species in the country (732), according to eBird records. It does not have the highest number of checklists, though. That is an indicator of the diverse habitats and regions that are represented: the dry scrub and even desert-like coastal lowlands and intra-montane valleys, the highlands of two mountain ranges, and the northern-most section that is on the humid Gulf of Mexico side. A one-week trip is not enough to cover it all, though. We did not get over the mountains to the north, or, as I said, very far east or west, due to time.

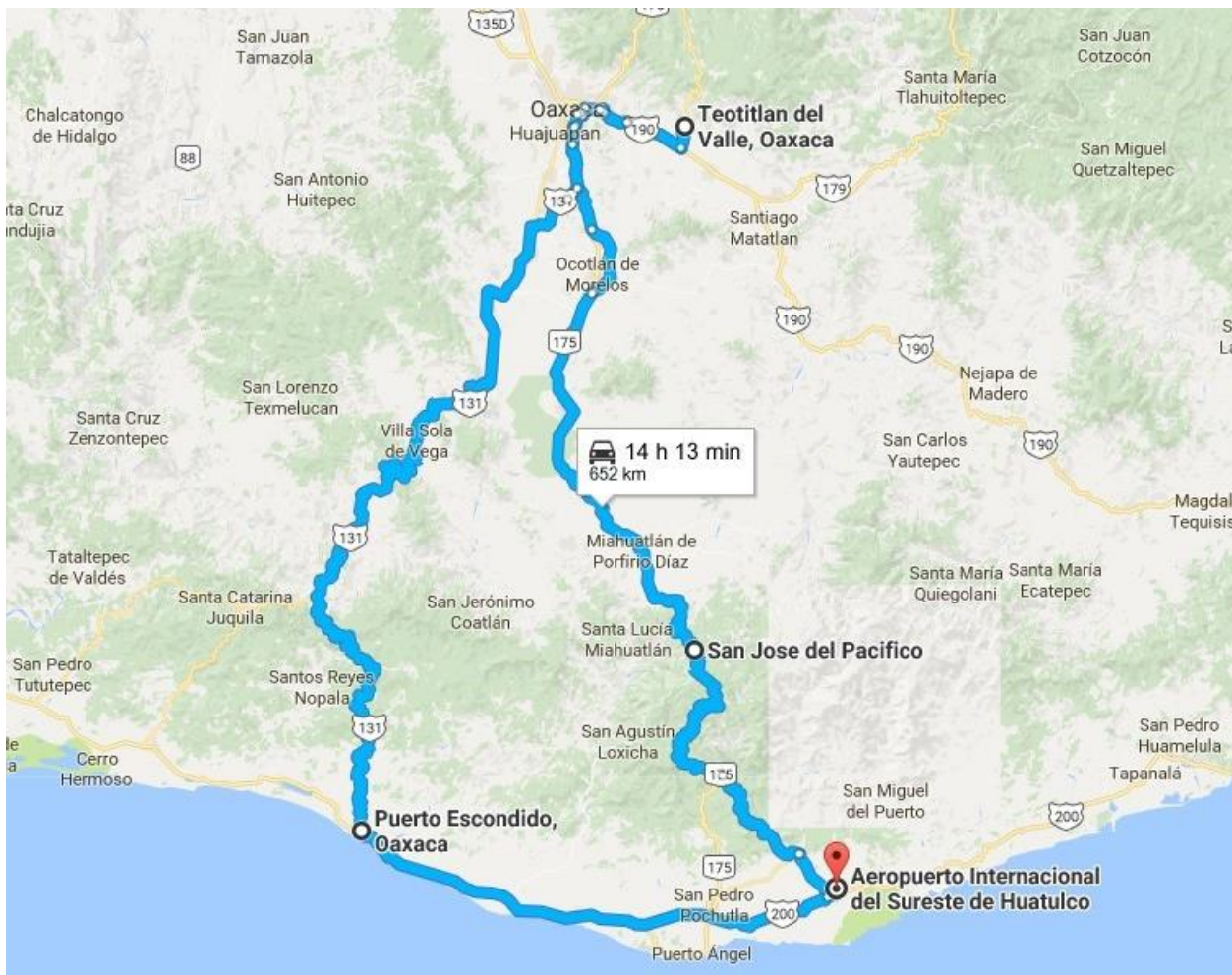
Mexico has a rich historical and cultural heritage that is celebrated and displayed all over. People are generally quite friendly and helpful, although somewhat more reserved than other parts of Latin

America. And of course there's the food. Wow. Even after all these years of connecting with Mexico and its food, I still feel like I need a dictionary of Mexican food every time I'm there or even go to a Mexican restaurant. There's just so much! I love it! Oaxaca has its share of regional specialty foods of course too.

Travel is generally easy and the highways are excellent, although there are some complications at times, especially in the small towns and some cities where the roads can be tricky. My observation on driving almost everywhere in Latin America is that it's easy to get into towns and cities but it's hard to get out. That's because once you get into the center, the streets change to one-way, many are very narrow and busy, and they may not go straight through due to plazas, churches, markets, etc. Of course, in the modern technological age, you have Google maps, Waze, and other navigational aids, so things are much easier. As long as you can connect! Cell service is pretty good all over Mexico except in the more remote and mountainous areas, which, come to think of it, covers most of the places we go birding. But we got around just fine. One feature of Mexican highways is the difference between "Cuota" (toll roads) and "Sin Cuota" (not toll roads). The "Cuota" roads are generally newer, fast excellent, and worth the extra money which is not too expensive; unless you want to see more of the sights and bird along the way, then usually you should take the "Sin Cuota" highways.

Car rental is easy and reasonable, gas stations and ATMs (for getting pesos) are fairly common and easy, and food is abundant and reasonable almost anywhere you go. For eating on the road, besides stopping at nice little restaurants, cafeterias, or street food vendors, we often just stop at a "tortillería" or a supermarket and get a half kilo of tortillas (for a pitance), and eat them with peanut butter, cheese, salsa, jelly, or even "vacías", without anything, when they're really fresh. MMM!.

The climate is generally hot and fairly dry, but up in the higher elevations it can be quite chilly so we make sure to bring appropriate clothing.



The above map shows our overall route, not including all excursions and side-trips, just the general round trip from the Huatulco airport and back. It shows 652 kilometers, but I'm sure we drove well over 1,000 Km. (Google Maps).

We rarely encounter any other birders in Mexico, even at hotspots, in the national parks, or among the park personnel, or in the hotels which often have wonderful grounds.

Having a smart phone with a good plan helped with all kinds of communications, navigation, etc., for everything from normal phone calls, Google, Google maps, Whatsapp for messaging, etc. We live in the Dominican Republic and our cell phone is through a company called "Claro", which either operates in Mexico or has affiliates, so I had full service at very minimal charge. Just being able to call the car rental places, hotels and restaurants, was nice. If you don't have service in the country, try going to a cell phone store and buying a SIM card. Speaking Spanish helps as not many people speak English outside the tourist areas.

## Day-by-day report:

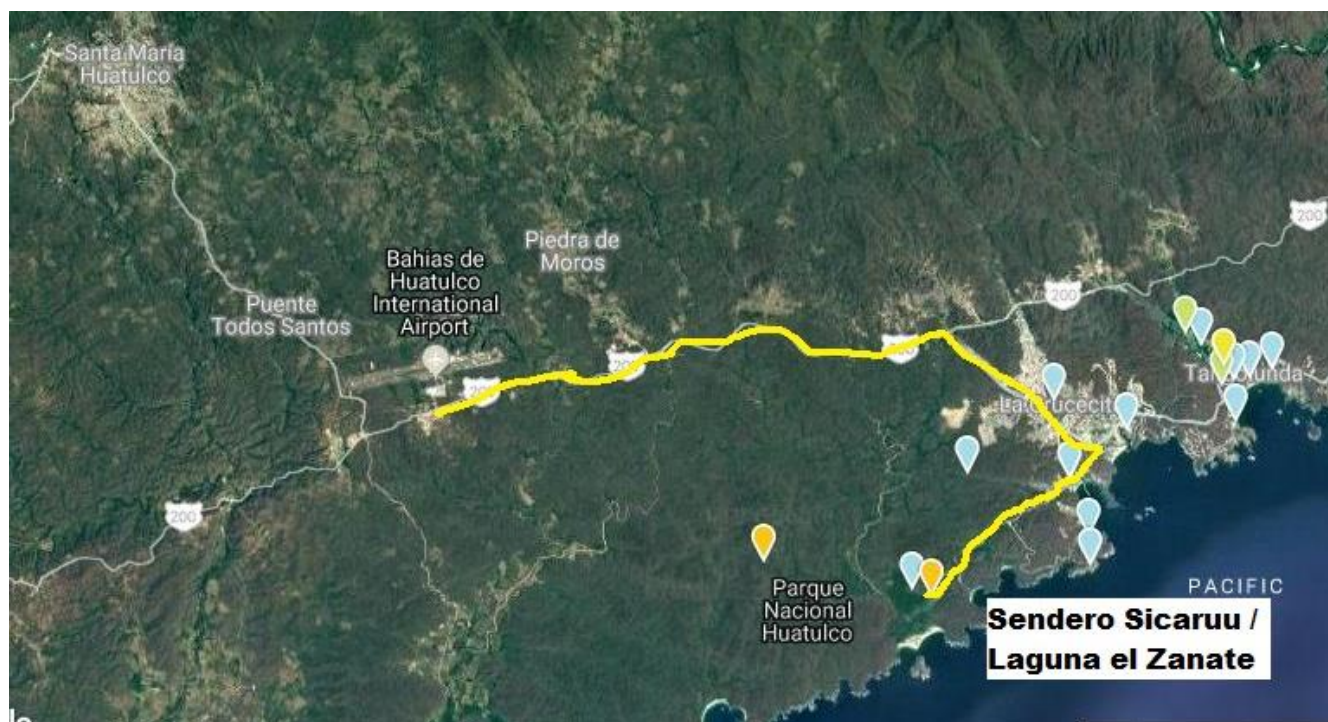
**Thursday March 9:** after an overnight-layover in Mexico City, we got an early flight to Huatulco on the southern coast of Oaxaca, where we rented a car and headed right to one of the hotspots, the Huatulco National Park. It is accessed through the town of Huatulco, as seen on the map below. Our favorite spot is Sendero Sicaruu, indicated on the map and easy to find. We liked it so much that we returned again on our departure day. We were happy to see several targets there including Happy Wren, Golden Vireo, Gray-collared Becard, Dusky Hummingbird, and Red-breasted Chat, plus other birds including Gray Hawk, Collared Forest Falcon, Olive Sparrow, and Lineated Woodpecker, a total of 32 species.

Location: PN Huatulco--Sendero Sicaruu/Laguna el Zanate March 9 & 21, 2017	<b>Total # of Species:</b>	32
	<b>Total # of Checklists:</b>	2
	Mar 9	Mar 21
Number of Species	21	17
Number of Individuals	59	55
Number of Checklists	1	1
<b>Species Name</b>	Mar 9	Mar 21
Dusky Hummingbird ( <i>Cynanthus sordidus</i> )	--	3
Broad-billed Hummingbird ( <i>Cynanthus latirostris</i> )	2	2
Cinnamon Hummingbird ( <i>Amazilia rutila</i> )	4	5
White-eared Hummingbird ( <i>Hylocharis leucotis</i> )	6	--
Black Vulture ( <i>Coragyps atratus</i> )	24	7
Turkey Vulture ( <i>Cathartes aura</i> )	3	11
Roadside Hawk ( <i>Rupornis magnirostris</i> )	--	1
Gray Hawk ( <i>Buteo plagiatus</i> )	1	--
Citreoline Trogon ( <i>Trogon citreolus</i> )	--	1
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker ( <i>Melanerpes chrysogenys</i> )	1	--
Lineated Woodpecker ( <i>Dryocopus lineatus</i> )	--	2
Collared Forest-Falcon ( <i>Micrastur semitorquatus</i> )	1	--
Crested Caracara ( <i>Caracara cheriway</i> )	1	--
Ivory-billed Woodcreeper ( <i>Xiphorhynchus flavigaster</i> )	1	--
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet ( <i>Camptostoma imberbe</i> )	1	--



Tropical Pewee ( <i>Contopus cinereus</i> )	1	--
Brown-crested Flycatcher ( <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i> )	--	1
Gray-collared Becard ( <i>Pachyramphus major</i> )	--	1
Golden Vireo ( <i>Vireo hypochryseus</i> )	1	--
Bell's Vireo ( <i>Vireo bellii</i> )	--	1
Rufous-naped Wren ( <i>Campylorhynchus rufinucha</i> )	3	--
Happy Wren ( <i>Pheugopedius felix</i> )	1	1
Banded Wren ( <i>Thryophilus pleurostictus</i> )	2	--
Olive Sparrow ( <i>Arremonops rufivirgatus</i> )	--	3
Yellow-winged Cacique ( <i>Cassiculus melanicterus</i> )	--	12
Hooded Oriole ( <i>Icterus cucullatus</i> )	--	2
Baltimore Oriole ( <i>Icterus galbula</i> )	2	--
Black-and-white Warbler ( <i>Mniotilta varia</i> )	--	1
Nashville Warbler ( <i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i> )	1	--
Yellow Warbler ( <i>Setophaga petechia</i> )	1	--
Red-crowned Ant-Tanager ( <i>Habia rubica</i> )	1	--
Red-breasted Chat ( <i>Granatellus venustus</i> )	1	1

Other birds on the target list for Huatulco National Park are: West-Mexico Chachalaca, Colima Pygmy Owl, Lilac-crowned Parrot, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Doubleday's Hummingbird, Cinnamon-sided Hummingbird, Flammulated Flycatcher, Black-capped Vireo, Blue Bunting, Hooded Oriole.



Then after a little shopping in town and lunch, we hit the road going back past the airport, turning right, and heading up the mountains, our goal being Cabañas La Puesta del Sol, in San José del Pacífico. It's 108 kilometers and Google map says 2 hours and 18 minutes but we knew better: it's not a cuota road so it is fairly slow, but also is quite scenic and has many good birding spots.

We controlled ourselves as far as the number of stops, but did have several irresistible bird-induced delays: there is a stretch centering around Km. 255 where we got 25 species including one lifer, the Audubon's Oriole, plus Citoline Trogon and Golden Vireo again.

Then as we got higher up, we started looking for somewhere to pull over, and hit upon a spot at about Km. 165: it is part of a switch-back, has a pull-off on the right (if you're heading up), and a short little road going in on the left. That became our favorite spot on the whole stretch, even though it was about 40 kilometers from our lodging, and we returned there each of three days that we were in the area. The short road can be walked in and then trails go up the slopes on both sides. The vegetation is amazing, including some flowering and fruiting trees that attract birds. We picked up 16 species on that first stop in just a half an hour, but had to keep going due to the late hour.

Our lodging, Cabañas Puesta del Sol is just a little ways past the cute little town of San José del Pacífico, at Km. 133 on Highway #175, at about 2,500 meters elevation, pretty much the highest point on this road. This photo shows the entrance from the other way.



We arrived just before dark, scouted the area, got settled in, ate a meal, then did a night-birding walk. A highlight and lifer was Mexican Whip-poor-will, heard only, which is a little frustrating since they were just down the slope, but at least they were clearly identified. We had a similar experience with the Long-tailed Wood Partridges there the next morning. We'll have three nights here, so as to have two full birding days. The grounds were very nice.

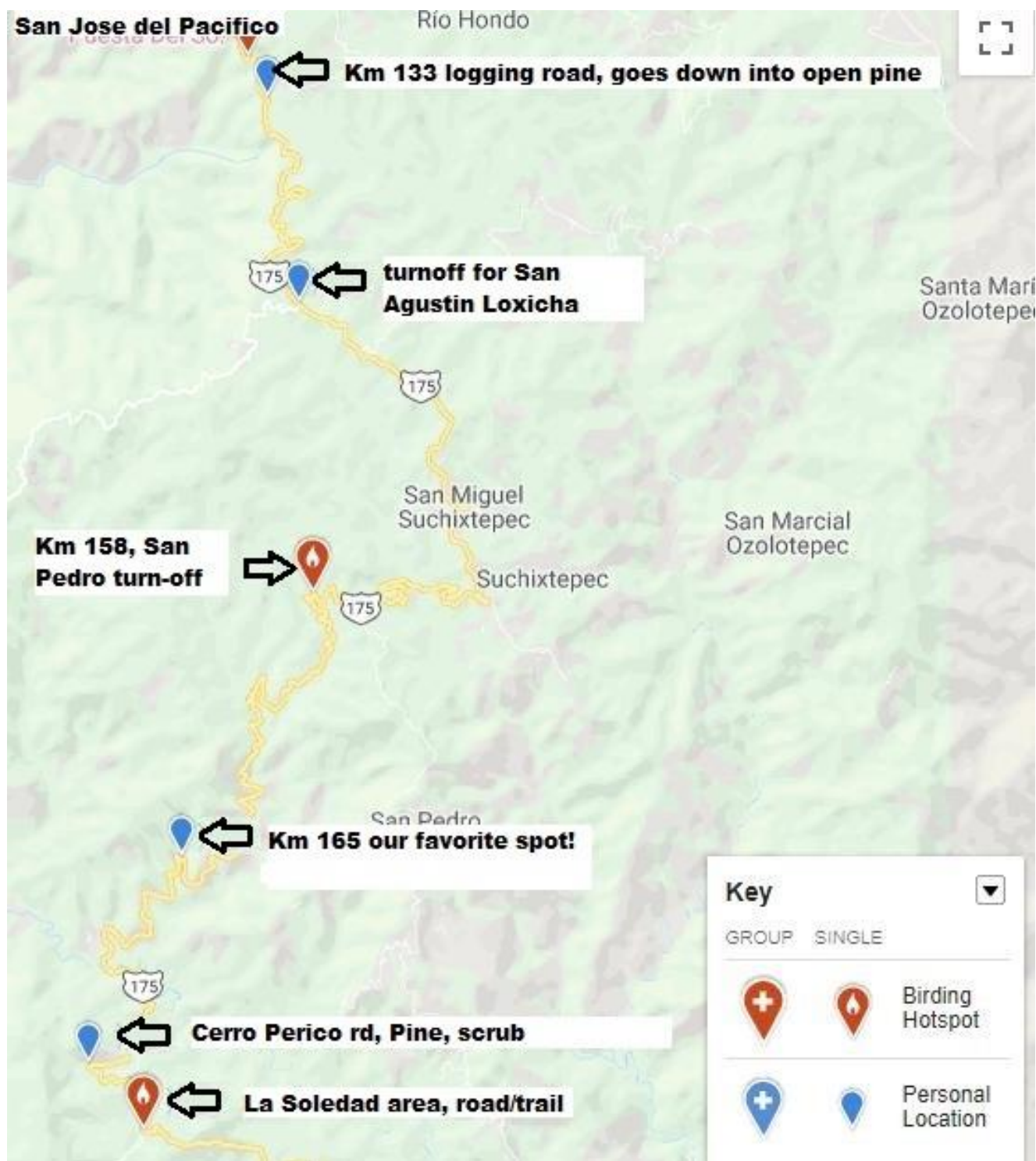
**Friday and Saturday, March 10 - 11:** The next morning we got up and headed back down the way we had come, heading for some of the known hot-spots and our favorite little pull-off at about Km 165. And it did not disappoint. Immediately birds were hopping and in two hours we had 43 species. Here is a list from the three times we stopped here, total, 49 species. Besides six lifers, of particular interest were the Evening Grosbeaks, totally unexpected by us since they have only rarely been reported in this mountain range, and never along this road, so they were totally off our radar. Plus we hadn't seen them for over 20 years anywhere.

We continued along the highway just down to about Km. 158, and then worked our way back up to San José del Pacífico, hitting other spots along the way; we did the same thing the next day as well, at a somewhat more leisurely pace. We ate a simple yet delicious lunch at a "comedor" by the roadside overlooking the dense canopy. Other meals were eaten at the Cabañas restaurant, and at a couple of small places in San José del Pacífico. Oaxaca food is yummy!!!



We had a total of 86 species in two and a half days in the Sierra de Miahuatlán. A big miss for us was the Red-headed Tanager, both here and on our next leg. ☹️ This is the eastern-most portion of its range so I guess we'll have to go elsewhere in western Mexico! ☺️

This map shows our birding locations on Route 175 on the higher part of the south (Pacific) slope of Sierra de Miahuatlán. Each one is worth some time.



Here's our lists for the area.

Sierra de Miahuatlán Rt 175 La Soledad road, Cerro Perico rd., Km 165, Km 158, San Agustin turnoff, Km 133 logging road, Cabañas Puesta del Sol. Also Km 255 (which is quite a ways south of the above map)		
Species Name	Cabañas Puesta del Sol	All Rt. 175 sites, 4 days
Long-tailed Wood-Partridge - <i>Dendrortyx macroura</i>	3	
Band-tailed Pigeon - <i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>		9
Inca Dove - <i>Columbina inca</i>		3
Squirrel Cuckoo - <i>Piaya cayana</i>		2
Mexican Whip-poor-will - <i>Antrastomus arizonae</i>	3	
White-collared Swift - <i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>		1
Vaux's Swift - <i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	1	19
Rivoli's Hummingbird - <i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	3	
Garnet-throated Hummingbird - <i>Lamprolaima rhami</i>		2
Blue-capped Hummingbird - <i>Eupherusa cyanophrys</i>		2
Berylline Hummingbird - <i>Amazilia beryllina</i>		1
White-eared Hummingbird - <i>Hylocharis leucotis</i>	5	5
Black Vulture - <i>Coragyps atratus</i>	9	22
Turkey Vulture - <i>Cathartes aura</i>	6	11
Roadside Hawk - <i>Rupornis magnirostris</i>		1
Gray Hawk - <i>Buteo plagiatus</i>		2
Red-tailed Hawk - <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	1	
Citreoline Trogon - <i>Trogon citreolus</i>		1
Mountain Trogon - <i>Trogon mexicanus</i>	2	6
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	1	
Acorn Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>		8
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes chrysogenys</i>		3
Gray-crowned Woodpecker - <i>Colaptes auricularis</i>		1
Orange-fronted Parakeet - <i>Eupsittula canicularis</i>		12
Spot-crowned Woodcreeper - <i>Lepidocolaptes affinis</i>		3
Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet - <i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>		1
Eye-ringed Flatbill - <i>Rhynchocyclus brevirostris</i>		1
Tufted Flycatcher - <i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>		6
Greater Pewee - <i>Contopus pertinax</i>		5
Pacific-slope/Cordilleran (Western) Flycatcher - <i>Empidonax difficilis/occidentalis</i>		2
Brown-crested Flycatcher - <i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>		1
Great Kiskadee - <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>		2
Masked Tityra - <i>Tityra semifasciata</i>		2
Rose-throated Becard - <i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>		1
Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo - <i>Vireolanius melitophrys</i>		3
Golden Vireo - <i>Vireo hypochryseus</i>		1
Hutton's Vireo - <i>Vireo huttoni</i>		2
Cassin's Vireo - <i>Vireo cassinii</i>		5
Warbling Vireo - <i>Vireo gilvus</i>		3



White-throated Magpie-Jay - <i>Calocitta Formosa</i>		4
Violet-green Swallow - <i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	5	
Mexican Chickadee - <i>Poecile sclateri</i>		2
Bushtit - <i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>		2
Brown Creeper - <i>Certhia Americana</i>		2
House Wren - <i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	1	
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren - <i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>		3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - <i>Polioptila caerulea</i>		3
Brown-backed Solitaire - <i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>		17
Russet Nightingale-Thrush - <i>Catharus occidentalis</i>	1	3
Swainson's Thrush - <i>Catharus ustulatus</i>		2
Hermit Thrush - <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	1	
White-throated Thrush - <i>Turdus assimilis</i>		3
American Robin - <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	6	2
Blue Mockingbird - <i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>	1	2
Gray Catbird - <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	1	
Gray Silky-flycatcher - <i>Ptiliogonys cinereus</i>	9	11
Olive Warbler - <i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	3	8
Evening Grosbeak - <i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>		7
Black-headed Siskin - <i>Spinus notatus</i>		7
Common Chlorospingus - <i>Chlorospingus flavopectus</i>	1	5
Yellow-eyed Junco - <i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	9	2
Lincoln's Sparrow - <i>Melospiza lincolni</i>		2
White-throated Towhee - <i>Melospiza albicollis</i>	6	
Spotted Towhee - <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	3	
Collared Towhee - <i>Pipilo ocai</i>		2
Rufous-capped Brushfinch - <i>Atlapetes pileatus</i>		1
Yellow-winged Cacique - <i>Cassiculus melanicterus</i>		4
Black-vented Oriole - <i>Icterus wagleri</i>	7	2
Orchard Oriole - <i>Icterus spurius</i>	3	1
Hooded Oriole - <i>Icterus cucullatus</i>		2
Bullock's Oriole - <i>Icterus bullockii</i>	5	2
Audubon's Oriole - <i>Icterus graduacauda</i>		2
Scott's Oriole - <i>Icterus parisorum</i>	7	2
Black-and-white Warbler - <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	1	4
Crescent-chested Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis superciliosa</i>	1	6
Tennessee Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>	2	
Orange-crowned Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis celata</i>	3	2
Nashville Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis ruficapilla</i>	4	6
MacGillivray's Warbler - <i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>		1
American Redstart - <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>		1
Yellow Warbler - <i>Setophaga petechia</i>		1
Yellow-rumped Warbler - <i>Setophaga coronate</i>		8
Grace's Warbler - <i>Setophaga graciae</i>		2

Townsend's Warbler - <i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	5	15
Hermit Warbler - <i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>		5
Black-throated Green Warbler - <i>Setophaga virens</i>		2
Rufous-capped Warbler - <i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>		1
Golden-browed Warbler - <i>Basileuterus belli</i>		2
Golden-crowned Warbler - <i>Basileuterus culicivorus</i>		1
Wilson's Warbler - <i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	1	3
Red-faced Warbler - <i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>		1
Red Warbler - <i>Cardellina rubra</i>	1	
Slate-throated Redstart - <i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	1	8
Hepatic Tanager - <i>Piranga flava</i>		3
Summer Tanager - <i>Piranga rubra</i>		2
Western Tanager - <i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	16	
Flame-colored Tanager - <i>Piranga bidentate</i>		1
Black-headed Grosbeak - <i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	1	1
Indigo Bunting - <i>Passerina cyanea</i>	1	1
Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer - <i>Diglossa baritula</i>		1

**Sunday March 12** saw us hitting the road, heading down the mountain but heading north this time, out across the wide intramontane valley to the city of Oaxaca, where we had reservations at the Casa Adobe Bed & Breakfast. It's just east of the city in a section called Tlalixtác. The area is kind of rustic and even a little stark due to the dry climate, walled compounds, scattered abandoned lots and buildings; and in fact Casa Adobe is (was?) on a rough, unpaved, very narrow street. In the photo to the right, it's the building on the left (not the right - ☺) The sign seen below the photo is quite small, but once we got in, we found a beautiful home, very comfortable lodgings (a separate efficiency apartment), a very compact but verdant courtyard, and hosts that were very friendly, helpful and accomodating. It's a great location for birding this area since it allows one to avoid most of the urban traffic of Oaxaca.

Nearby is one of those quintessential town squares and a really beautiful little Roman Catholic church, worth a stroll around. Also just five kilometers to the east is Santa María de Tule, which has an area of great restaurants, shops, and artisans, and on the grounds of a little chapel is what they claim to be the tree with the largest diameter and circumference of any tree in the world. "El Árbol de Tule", a Montezuma Cypress that is at least 1,400 year old, well worth a visit.

We have four nights here, so that we can have

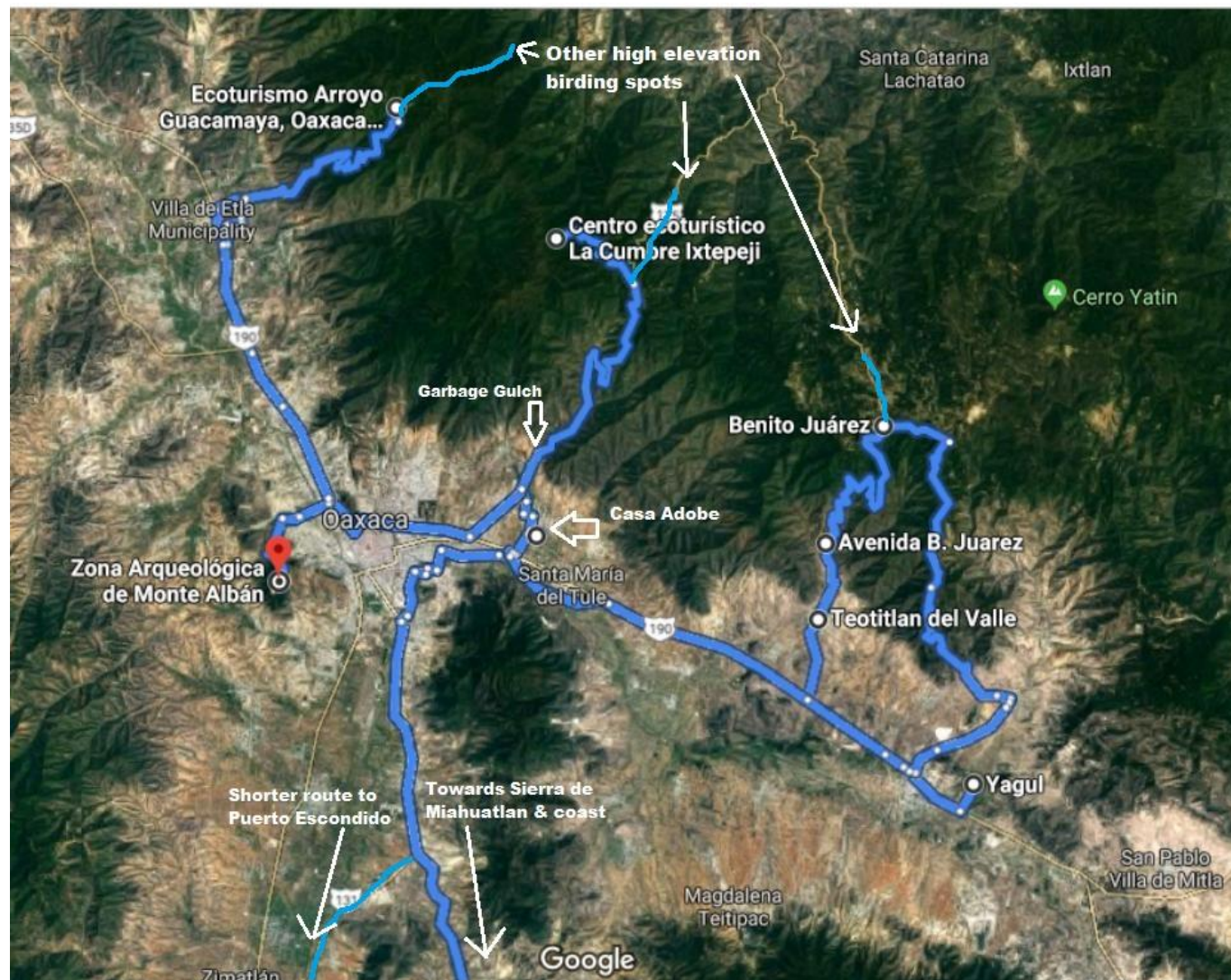


three full days to cover the various areas: there are three roads up into the mountains that each deserve a decent amount of time, plus there are interesting habitats in the Oaxaca valley, and there are ruins!

The surrounding patchy farmland yielded some interesting species, some of which that we had not seen elsewhere.

On our first evening, we also ventured out of town to the north to what we call “Garbage Gulch” on Rt. 175N. There we got one of our targets, the Bridled Sparrow. We would be returning there, so we’ll report on that later in more detail.

Here is an overall map of our birding in this area, with all our destinations indicated. See below for more detailed maps.



**Monday March 13** was the day to take the Teotitlan del Valle highway, first heading east on Rt. 190 for about 18 kilometers and then 4 km. north on the road to this little town. This area is worth spending a whole day around, going up and then back down the mountain roads, stopping at any decent site, including areas of scattered agriculture and the small reservoir, after which the mostly dry valley gives way to pine forest and on up to the little town of Benito Juárez, about 20 km.

**Tuesday March 14** was the trip to La Cumbre: We started very early so as to get to the ideal habitat before dawn in order to search for owls. The trip from Casa Adobe was about 40 minutes, and we pulled into the road leading to “Ecoturismo La Cumbre Ixtepeji” but in the pouring rain. That meant a



bad start, and no owls. But the skies cleared and we spent whole day in the pine forests, up and down the roads, including going out to a “comedor” a bit further up the highway.

We missed a few species in this area: Long-tailed Wood-Partridge, Lesser Roadrunner, Mexican Whip-poor-will, Flammulated Owl, Fulvous Owl, Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, Garnet-throated Hummingbird, Rufous Hummingbird, Bumblebee Hummingbird, Pine Flycatcher, Gray-barred Wren, Black Thrush, Aztec Thrush.

**Wednesday March 15** took us from Casa Adobe to Centro de Ecoturismo Arroyo Guacamaya, another access into the higher elevation pine. This was about an hour and a half drive, which culminated in a nice waterfall.

In the afternoon during our return, we stopped at the Garbage Gulch, and went up to Monte Albán, an important and very impressive ruin that is well worth visiting. I wish we had spent more time since it is quite extensive.

**Thursday March 16** was the day to travel back to the coast since meeting were to start that afternoon. We took a different route, one that went more directly to Puerto Escondido, and did not attempt much birding except for a few stops in the Oaxaca valley. We arrived at the hotel later in the afternoon.

Here's our lists for the area.

Oaxaca and surrounding points	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar	16-Mar
Species Name	Drive to Oaxaca, Garbage Gulch	Presa Piedra Azul, Teotitlan, Benito Juarez & Yagul	La Cumbre & Tlalixtac pueblo	Guacamayo, Garbage Gulch, Monte Alban	Drive to Puerto Escondido
Ruddy Duck - <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	--	5	--	--	--
West Mexican Chachalaca - <i>Ortalis poliocephala</i>	--	4	--	--	3
Least Grebe - <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	--	45	--	--	--
Rock Pigeon - <i>Columba livia</i>	--	--	22	5	--
Eurasian Collared-Dove - <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	--	--	--	2	--
Inca Dove - <i>Columbina inca</i>	6	2	--	--	--
Common Ground-Dove - <i>Columbina passerine</i>	--	2	--	--	--
White-tipped Dove - <i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>	--	2	--	--	--
White-winged Dove - <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	3	3	--	1	1
Mourning Dove - <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	--	2	--	1	19
Groove-billed Ani - <i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>	--	--	8	--	--
Mexican Whip-poor-will - <i>Antrostomus arizonae</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Rivoli's Hummingbird - <i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	--	--	3	2	--
Beautiful Hummingbird - <i>Calothorax pulcher</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Broad-tailed Hummingbird - <i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Dusky Hummingbird - <i>Cynanthus sordidus</i>	--	1	--	--	--
White-eared Hummingbird - <i>Hylocharis leucotis</i>	--	--	5	3	--
American Coot - <i>Fulica americana</i>	--	15	--	--	--
Killdeer - <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	--	4	--	--	--
Least Sandpiper - <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	--	140	--	--	--
Spotted Sandpiper - <i>Actitis macularius</i>	--	1	--	--	--

Solitary Sandpiper - <i>Tringa solitaria</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Great Blue Heron - <i>Ardea Herodias</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Great Egret - <i>Ardea alba</i>	--	5	--	--	--
Snowy Egret - <i>Egretta thula</i>	--	8	--	--	--
Little Blue Heron - <i>Egretta caerulea</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Tricolored Heron - <i>Egretta tricolor</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Cattle Egret - <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	5	--	--	--	3
Green Heron - <i>Butorides virescens</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Black Vulture - <i>Coragyps atratus</i>	2	6	2	--	5
Turkey Vulture - <i>Cathartes aura</i>	3	7	4	1	2
White-tailed Kite - <i>Elanus leucurus</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Cooper's Hawk - <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	1	--	--	--	--
White-tailed Hawk - <i>Geranoaetus albicaudatus</i>	1	--	--	--	2
Red-tailed Hawk - <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	--	1	1	1	--
Elegant Trogon - <i>Trogon elegans</i>	--	--	--	2	--
Mountain Trogon - <i>Trogon mexicanus</i>	--	--	1	2	--
Green Kingfisher - <i>Chloroceryle Americana</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Acorn Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	--	--	2	2	--
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker - <i>Melanerpes chrysogenys</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Ladder-backed Woodpecker - <i>Dryobates scalaris</i>	--	2	--	--	2
Hairy Woodpecker - <i>Dryobates villosus</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Crested Caracara - <i>Caracara cheriway</i>	3	--	--	--	--
American Kestrel - <i>Falco sparverius</i>	1	1	--	--	--
White-striped Woodcreeper - <i>Lepidocolaptes leucogaster</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Spot-crowned Woodcreeper - <i>Lepidocolaptes affinis</i>	--	--	2	--	--
Pileated Flycatcher - <i>Xenotriccus mexicanus</i>	--	--	--	--	1
Tufted Flycatcher - <i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Greater Pewee - <i>Contopus pertinax</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Pine Flycatcher - <i>Empidonax affinis</i>	--	1	--	1	--
Vermilion Flycatcher - <i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Ash-throated Flycatcher - <i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	1	--	--	--	1
Great Kiskadee - <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Tropical Kingbird - <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	1	--	--	--	--
Cassin's Kingbird - <i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	3	3	1	1	--
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher - <i>Tyrannus forficatus</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Loggerhead Shrike - <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	1	2	--	1	2
Slaty Vireo - <i>Vireo brevipennis</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Dwarf Vireo - <i>Vireo nelsoni</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Hutton's Vireo - <i>Vireo huttoni</i>	--	--	1	2	--
Cassin's Vireo - <i>Vireo cassinii</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Plumbeous Vireo - <i>Vireo plumbeus</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Warbling Vireo - <i>Vireo gilvus</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Dwarf Jay - <i>Cyanolyca nanus</i>	--	--	10	--	--

White-throated Magpie-Jay - <i>Calocitta Formosa</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Steller's Jay - <i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	--	--	18	1	--
Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay - <i>Aphelocoma woodhouseii</i>	--	--	--	2	--
Common Raven - <i>Corvus corax</i>	--	--	1	1	--
Northern Rough-winged Swallow - <i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	--	18	--	--	--
Gray-breasted Martin - <i>Progne chalybea</i>	7	--	--	--	2
Barn Swallow - <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Cliff Swallow - <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	5	--	--	--	--
Mexican Chickadee - <i>Poecile sclateri</i>	--	--	4	2	--
Bridled Titmouse - <i>Baeolophus wollweberi</i>	--	1	--	4	--
Bushtit - <i>Psaltiriparus minimus</i>	--	--	--	18	--
Brown Creeper - <i>Certhia Americana</i>	--	--	2	4	--
Rock Wren - <i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	--	2	--	--	--
Bewick's Wren - <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Gray-barred Wren - <i>Campylorhynchus megalopterus</i>	--	--	14	2	--
Boucard's Wren - <i>Campylorhynchus jocosus</i>	--	--	--	2	--
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - <i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	--	2	3	2	--
Ruby-crowned Kinglet - <i>Regulus calendula</i>	--	--	3	1	--
Brown-backed Solitaire - <i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>	--	2	4	4	--
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush - <i>Catharus frantzii</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Swainson's Thrush - <i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	--	--	2	--	--
Hermit Thrush - <i>Catharus guttatus</i>	--	--	16	2	--
White-throated Thrush - <i>Turdus assimilis</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Black Thrush - <i>Turdus infuscatus</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Blue Mockingbird - <i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Curve-billed Thrasher - <i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	--	2	--	--	2
Ocellated Thrasher - <i>Toxostoma ocellatum</i>	--	--	--	3	--
Gray Silky-flycatcher - <i>Ptiliogonys cinereus</i>	--	--	2	2	--
Olive Warbler - <i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	--	--	3	2	--
Elegant Euphonia - <i>Euphonia elegantissima</i>	--	1	--	--	--
House Finch - <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	--	14	6	34	--
Black-headed Siskin - <i>Spinus notatus</i>	--	--	14	--	--
Lesser Goldfinch - <i>Spinus psaltria</i>	14	5	2	2	2
Bridled Sparrow - <i>Peucaea mystacalis</i>	3	--	--	--	3
Chipping Sparrow - <i>Spizella passerine</i>	--	3	--	--	--
Lark Sparrow - <i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	--	1	--	--	--
Yellow-eyed Junco - <i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	--	--	7	7	--
Lincoln's Sparrow - <i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	--	1	--	--	1
White-throated Towhee - <i>Melospiza albicollis</i>	2	3	2	--	3
Oaxaca Sparrow - <i>Aimophila notosticta</i>	--	--	--	5	2
Spotted Towhee - <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Collared Towhee - <i>Pipilo ocai</i>	--	--	2	--	--
Rufous-capped Brushfinch - <i>Atlapetes pileatus</i>	--	--	5	--	--



Eastern Meadowlark - <i>Sturnella magna</i>	--	--	--	--	1
Black-vented Oriole - <i>Icterus wagleri</i>	--	2	5	--	--
Baltimore Oriole - <i>Icterus galbula</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Scott's Oriole - <i>Icterus parisorum</i>	--	--	6	--	--
Bronzed Cowbird - <i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	5	2	--	2	--
Great-tailed Grackle - <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	7	--	2	5	--
Black-and-white Warbler - <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	--	--	--	1	1
Crescent-chested Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis superciliosa</i>	--	--	5	1	--
Tennessee Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis peregrina</i>	--	1	2	11	--
Orange-crowned Warbler - <i>Oreothlypis celata</i>	--	--	4	2	--
MacGillivray's Warbler - <i>Geothlypis tolmiei</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Cape May Warbler - <i>Setophaga tigrine</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Yellow Warbler - <i>Setophaga petechia</i>	--	--	--	--	--
Yellow-rumped Warbler - <i>Setophaga coronate</i>	--	4	22	--	--
Grace's Warbler - <i>Setophaga graciae</i>	--	1	1	--	--
Black-throated Gray Warbler - <i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	--	--	--	3	1
Townsend's Warbler - <i>Setophaga townsendi</i>	--	--	3	1	--
Hermit Warbler - <i>Setophaga occidentalis</i>	--	1	11	3	--
Black-throated Green Warbler - <i>Setophaga virens</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Rufous-capped Warbler - <i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>	--	1	--	4	1
Golden-browed Warbler - <i>Basileuterus belli</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Wilson's Warbler - <i>Cardellina pusilla</i>	--	1	6	1	--
Red-faced Warbler - <i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Red Warbler - <i>Cardellina rubra</i>	--	--	9	3	--
Painted Redstart - <i>Myioborus pictus</i>	--	1	--	2	--
Slate-throated Redstart - <i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	--	--	3	4	--
Hepatic Tanager - <i>Piranga flava</i>	--	--	1	1	--
Summer Tanager - <i>Piranga rubra</i>	--	--	1	--	--
Western Tanager - <i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	2	1	--	--	--
Black-headed Grosbeak - <i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	--	1	--	1	--
Blue Grosbeak - <i>Passerina caerulea</i>	--	5	--	--	--
Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer - <i>Diglossa baritula</i>	--	--	--	1	--
Cinnamon-rumped Seedeater - <i>Sporophila torqueola</i>	--	1	--	1	--
House Sparrow - <i>Passer domesticus</i>	5	4	4	2	--

**Friday March 17** through Monday we were at the Posada Real hotel on the beach at **Puerto Escondido**. Our schedule allowed a little time for birding around the hotel, and the dry scrub yielded a few interesting species: Bell's Vireo, some decent flocks of Orchard Orioles on the move north, and a real thrill was the Orange-breasted Bunting, a

The retreat schedule also included excursions each day: one was an evening trip to **Laguna de Manialtepec**, only 20 minutes from the hotel, with the purpose of swimming with the bio-luminous microorganisms, a truly amazing experience, highly recommended. They take you out on boats in the middle of this miles-long lagoon, in the dark, and you jump into the water, which literally lights up all around you! Every movement in the water produces a reaction in which they glow with a pale blue-

green light, a self-defense mechanism I suppose. They are quite small, but the lights are clearly distinguishable, and at times they are quite concentrated and numerous. Just dipping your hands into the water and lifting them up causes a virtual waterfall of light. You forget that you are bobbing around in the dark in open water, something that normally would have been a bit disconcerting.

While at the lake, even though it was dark, we could tell that it was good habitat, so my wife and I arranged with one of the local boat captains to take us out again the next day during our afternoon break, and it was amazing. The lake holds a large colony of Wood Storks, as well as smaller colonies of Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brown Pelicans, and various species of herons, including Boat-billed, which were all breeding. That is a spectacle also well worth a special trip. Our boat captain took us into some smaller side channels on the north side of the lake and near the beach where we saw some of the ducks, terns, and the passerines.

Some other folks heard about a boat trip to see dolphins, and we jumped on the chance for a “mini-pelagic”. It was slow on the dolphin side, but there were tons of Green Sea Turtles, and a few pelagic bird species (see list). Also by the boat launch area, there are some ponds that yielded some birds.

<b>Puerto Escondido area</b>	Laguna de Manialtepec	Posada Real and Puerto Escondido beach	Pelagic
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck ( <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i> )	42		
Blue-winged Teal ( <i>Spatula discors</i> )	23	3	
West Mexican Chachalaca ( <i>Ortalis poliocephala</i> )	2		
Rock Pigeon - <i>Columba livia</i>	--	23	
Red-billed Pigeon ( <i>Patagioenas flavirostris</i> )	1		
Inca Dove ( <i>Columbina inca</i> )	26	5	
Common Ground-Dove ( <i>Columbina passerina</i> )	21	3	
White-winged Dove ( <i>Zenaida asiatica</i> )	30	13	
Broad-billed Hummingbird - <i>Cynanthus latirostris</i>	--	--	
Cinnamon Hummingbird - <i>Amazilia rutila</i>	9	5	
Groove-billed Ani ( <i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i> )	1		
Common Gallinule ( <i>Gallinula galeata</i> )	6		
American Coot ( <i>Fulica americana</i> )	34		
Black-necked Stilt ( <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i> )	10	17	
Semipalmated Plover - <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	--	--	
Least Sandpiper - <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	--	--	
Pectoral Sandpiper - <i>Calidris melanotos</i>	--	--	
Spotted Sandpiper ( <i>Actitis macularius</i> )	2	1	
Solitary Sandpiper ( <i>Tringa solitaria</i> )	1		
Willet ( <i>Tringa semipalmata</i> )	1	1	
Lesser Yellowlegs ( <i>Tringa flavipes</i> )	6		
jaeger sp. ( <i>Stercorarius</i> sp. (jaeger sp.))			1
Laughing Gull ( <i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i> )	17	64	70
Caspian Tern ( <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> )	13		6
Royal Tern ( <i>Thalasseus maximus</i> )	16	75	28
Sandwich Tern - <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	--	44	15
Elegant Tern ( <i>Thalasseus elegans</i> )	9		4

Wood Stork ( <i>Mycteria americana</i> )	850		
Black Storm-Petrel ( <i>Oceanodroma melania</i> )			4
shearwater sp. (Procellariidae sp. (shearwater sp.))			12
Magnificent Frigatebird ( <i>Fregata magnificens</i> )	700	5	56
Anhinga ( <i>Anhinga anhinga</i> )	40		
Neotropic Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i> )	450		
sulid sp. (Sulidae sp.)			1
Brown Pelican ( <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> )	8	100	110
Bare-throated Tiger-Heron ( <i>Tigrisoma mexicanum</i> )	5		
Great Blue Heron ( <i>Ardea herodias</i> )	3		
Great Egret ( <i>Ardea alba</i> )	26	3	
Snowy Egret ( <i>Egretta thula</i> )	22	5	
Little Blue Heron ( <i>Egretta caerulea</i> )	5	1	
Tricolored Heron ( <i>Egretta tricolor</i> )	9		
Cattle Egret ( <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> )	8	3	
Green Heron ( <i>Butorides virescens</i> )	13	2	
Black-crowned Night-Heron ( <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> )	5		
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron ( <i>Nyctanassa violacea</i> )	3		
Boat-billed Heron ( <i>Cochlearius cochlearius</i> )	14		
White Ibis ( <i>Eudocimus albus</i> )	19		
White-faced Ibis ( <i>Plegadis chihi</i> )	5		
Roseate Spoonbill ( <i>Platalea ajaja</i> )	3		
Black Vulture ( <i>Coragyps atratus</i> )	23	12	
Turkey Vulture ( <i>Cathartes aura</i> )	13	10	
Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )	2		
Common Black Hawk ( <i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i> )	3		
Citreoline Trogon - Trogon citreolus	--		4
Russet-crowned Motmot - Momotus mexicanus	--		1
Ringed Kingfisher ( <i>Megaceryle torquata</i> )	11		
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker ( <i>Melanerpes chrysogenys</i> )	1	11	
American Kestrel - Falco sparverius	--		2
Peregrine Falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	1	1	
White-fronted Parrot ( <i>Amazona albifrons</i> )	48		
Orange-fronted Parakeet ( <i>Eupsittula canicularis</i> )	4		
Great Kiskadee ( <i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i> )	14	21	
Social Flycatcher - Myiozetetes similis	--	4	
Tropical Kingbird ( <i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i> )	9	17	
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher ( <i>Tyrannus forficatus</i> )	2	10	
Bell's Vireo - Vireo bellii	--	1	--
Blue-headed Vireo - Vireo solitarius	--	1	1
Warbling Vireo - Vireo gilvus	--	1	1
White-throated Magpie-Jay ( <i>Calocitta formosa</i> )	4	7	
Gray-breasted Martin ( <i>Progne chalybea</i> )	3	34	



