

Dominican Republic 2022 - 29th of Nov - 6th of Dec

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Scope

The obvious goal was to try and see all possible endemics and as many other species. Since it was December, some species are hard / impossible to see: Caribbean Martin, Antillean Nighthawk, White-tailed Tropicbird (summer breeders) and Black-capped Petrel (not present at the breeding sites 15th of Nov- end of Dec, according to Petrel researchers I contacted).

We saw all other possible endemics, and most of the secondary targets in 7 days of birding. Overall number of species was close to 110. Most regular trips see around 100-130 species (depending on the time spent). See the Target bird list at the end of the report. Be warned that, while the Dominican Republic looks like easy birding in paradise, this wasn't much easier than most of my birding trips: seeing all endemics requires early morning starts, nightbirding, some (off-road) driving,... If you think of combining this trip with e.g. a family holiday, think twice 😊.

Resources

As usual, some websites were carefully scanned for exact coordinates (observation mostly) and recent sightings (ebird mostly). The most useful reports on cloudbirders (imho) were written by:

[Hans Matheve](#) - [Gilles Delforge](#) - [Ross Gallardy](#) - [Ian Merrill](#) - [Bill Simpson](#) - [Volker Hesse](#) - [Michiel de Boer](#)

To all of those (and others writing trip reports not mentioned here): thanks! You deserve a place in the birders' walhalla (for all others there will be a birdless hell).

All observations were logged (with coordinates) in the field with the super handy app iObs (android: Obsmapp) and were transferred every time we had WIFI to observation.org. A full trip list, which has all info with regards to GPS locations and time of day of each and every single observation, can be found [HERE](#).

In the field, we used both XC sounds and the Merlin app. While the Merlin app is great, it often doesn't have a specific sound, e.g. the sound made by Antillean Siskin (a high contact call) was not on the Merlin app, but I had it through XC. So be aware the Merlin app is (still) not perfect (but it's very, very good, no doubt about that!).

Immigration / documents

For Europeans like us, a passport is the only thing you need to enter, but you also need to fill in a form to enter and to leave the country. If you forgot (like we did), you log in to the free WIFI on the airport, you scan the QR code and fill out the form in a few minutes. The form was not checked on arrival, but it was checked on departure when checking in for our flight. There wasn't any tourist visa nor any other cost entering the country.

Health and safety

For once a chapter I don't get over lightly. I suffered severe diarrhea, and luckily, someone (not me, thanks Geert!) was smart enough to bring Azitromycine. Without the pills, I could have suffered serious dehydration. Besides dysentery, there are the obvious mosquitos but not much else (tarantulas were generally numerous but friendly).

There is one more thing however that can get any 4-o'clock birder in a nerve-wracking state of mind: extreme loud music at night. Dominicans are able to blow about any speaker and they won't think twice doing so, even if this means they have to start their sound system at 2AM on a Sunday night. Bring your earplugs for the sake of you getting the necessary hours of sleep...! I forgot to tell you that Dominicans are ALL very friendly people. Even police and military!

Rental car and moving around

We got a Suzuki Jimny (4WD) from Alamo for 350 euro. This was an upgrade offered by Alamo: we originally booked a medium-sized 2WD for 320 euro. After the first day of driving, we found out that the DR is full of speed bumps, and the inverse: ditches that border the main streets / side streets and create quite some problems to cross into a side street for cars without any clearance. So we felt the car (and mainly the additional clearance) was absolutely worth the upgrade. The most handy feature of this car however, was that this thing is a serious 4WD so we were able to get up Loma de Hoz and the Zapoten road without any problems whatsoever, and given the cost of renting a 4WD for a day for these specific locations (well above 100 euro / dollar / day), and given we used it for both Loma de Hoz and Zapoten, the car was worth every penny.

Traffic is pretty light, except in and around Santo Domingo. The ring road around the capital has no traffic jams and thus is, most of the time, quicker, compared to driving through the city center. You have to pay some toll though (around 5-10 euro in total). Dominicans drive like tossers, as Bill Simpson wrote in his report. They don't understand basic driving skills like taking a curve, using lights / flashlights at night / indicators / ... It's like they all got their license with a bag of chips. But driving is generally easy and relaxed. Just watch out for those speedbumps, and around Punta Cana, watch out for police with speed guns. Roads are generally OK bar the occasional pothole / unpaved stretch.

Money

ATMs take both VISA and Mastercard and are found in major towns. We didn't find too many hotels / restaurants accepting cards, though. We also brought some dollars. Paying with credit card and dollars is more cost efficient than getting pesos from the cajero, but for some places you don't have another option than to pay cash...

All in all, we spent 440 euro for the flight, and 710 euro pp once in the country. We could even have saved another 60 euro pp if we weren't overly cautious on the Zapoten road: the first time we ascended, we rented a 4WD and driver as we didn't want to risk our car getting damaged. As we missed La Selle Thrush on this first ascent, we decided to do it again a day later, but with our own car.

Itinerary + accommodation

During our stay, twilight was around 6.30AM, birding light started at 7AM and around 6PM the birding was over. This will of course be different in e.g. March / April when birding starts half an hour earlier and lasts half an hour more in the evening. We needed a full 7 days to see all target birds, and this involved seeing Ashy-faced Owl and Ridgway's Hawk on the first try. Our initial schedule had one spare day, and in the end, we needed that day to hit the Zapoten road a second time. While tight, one could squeeze in the botanical gardens and a place like Laguna del Rincon (Yellow-breasted Crake), but we soft pedaled a bit after a last morning on Zapoten.

Hotels were mostly basic but clean and chosen for convenience / price. All of the hotels had (good) WIFI. None of the hotels below accepted credit cards (cash only).

Food was mostly basic and honestly nothing to remember, except maybe the house parrot (Hispaniolan Parrot) that decided he wanted some of our dinner at restaurant Ibiza in Pedernales.

29/11	2PM arrival in Punta Cana. 2-5PM: Drive the rental + some stops to Sabana del Mar arrival 5-6PM: Some daylight birding on the road to Cano Hondo 6.30-7.30PM: Night birding	Night in hotel Las Colinas, Sabana del Mar Comfortable, clean, good beds and bathroom. fan. 9kms away from Cano Hondo. Parking on inner court with fenced gate. The last bit of road to reach the hotel is unpaved and pretty bumpy. Around 25 euro / double / night.
30/11	7-11AM birding Cano Hondo (30 minutes drive from hotel) 11AM-4PM drive Sabana del Mar - Salinas de Bani 4-5PM birding Salinas de Bani 5-7PM: drive to Barahona	Night in Susana's house, Barahona Comfortable, clean, good beds and bathroom. fan. 30 minutes from Loma de Hoz. Quiet neighborhood. Parking on a very secure inner court. Friendly owner, personal approach. Good WIFI. 50 dollar cash / double / night, which was a bit overpriced, but we arrived without notice so we were OK and didn't bargain. The owner arranged some food to be brought to our room, as well.
01/12	7-11AM: birding Loma de Hoz (30 mins drive from hotel) 11AM-3PM: drive (+ brunch) to Laguna Oviedo 3PM: short birding stop Laguna Oviedo 3-4PM: drive to Cabo Rojo 4-5.30PM: birding Cabo Rojo + a quick swim (Playa de Abadesa) 6PM: Pedernales	Night in hotel Casa Oasis, Pedernales Comfortable, clean, good beds and bathroom. airco. 30 minutes from Alcoa road. Centrally located in Pedernales. Parking on the inner court. Very friendly lady made breakfast at 4AM (we didn't ask and even explicitly told her we would leave early so we didn't want her to get up in the morning, still, she took the initiative to spoil us a bit). Good WIFI. 35 dollar cash / double / night.
02/12	4.30-6.30AM: nightbirding Alcoa road (30 mins drive from hotel) 6.30-12AM: birding Alcoa road 12AM-5PM: drive (+lunch) to Villa Barrancoli 5-6PM: some day birding on Rabo de Gato	Nights in Villa Barrancoli, Villa Barrancoli Basic huts, clean, good beds with mosquito nets. Shared 'bathroom' with clean toilet, cold shower. No fan or aircon but the huts are open (with maze in the openings), and it gets pretty fresh at night so no need

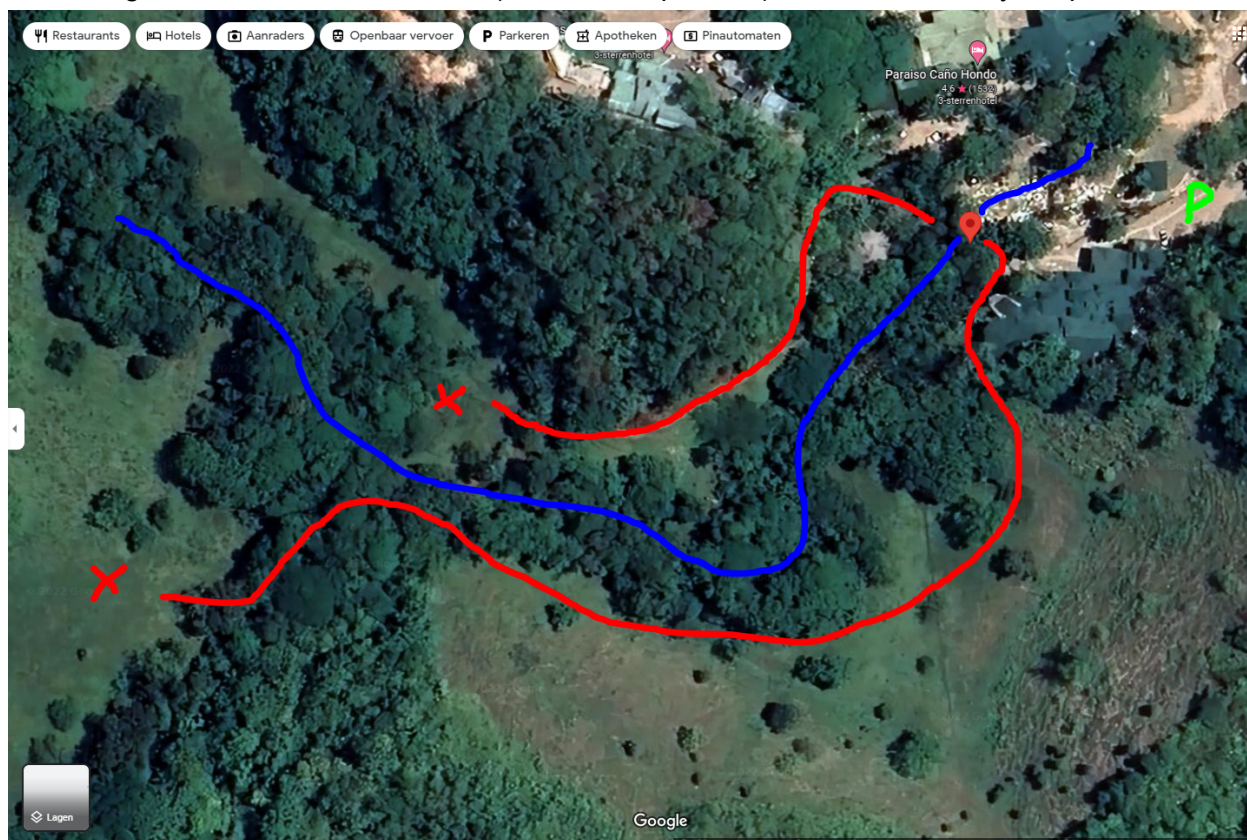
	Some post-dinner night birding in the gardens of Villa Barrancoli Night in Villa Barrancoli	for a fan or aircon. Located directly at the start of the Rabo de Gato trail, with Least Pauraque heard every night in the garden. Dining place where Kate Wallace is present most of the time. Kate is quite an interesting character and she is very talkative. I personally appreciated the talks and company very much. She has all the right intentions to make your logistics as easy as possible. Good WIFI but only around the dining area. No credit cards. We agreed on a price that I already discussed while planning this trip in 2020 (when it was canceled due to Covid), but the standard price is 65 dollar / night with dinner included. Breakfast (or packed breakfast / lunch) can be made for 5 dollars extra. The price is a bit steep imho, but the place is quiet (well, yes, the Dominican sound systems in Puerto Escondido still try hard to keep you awake at night!) and right at the birding trail so still preferred, above staying at either Puerto Escondido or Duverge (that last town is already 15-20 minutes driving).
03/12	7AM-12AM: birding Rabo de Gato trail 1-6PM: birding Zapoten road up until 5kms beyond la Placa + agricultural areas around Puerto Escondido 7PM-8PM: night birding around the aguacate plantations Night in Villa Barrancoli	
04/12	4AM-6AM: drive to Zapoten 6AM-12AM: birding Zapoten 12AM-3PM: drive back down + some birding stops 3-6PM: rest (sick) Night in Villa Barrancoli	
05/12	4.30-6.30AM: drive to Zapoten 6.30-8AM: birding Zapoten 8-10.30AM: drive back down 11AM-5.30PM: drive to Bayahibe	Night in hotel Pulpo, Bayahibe Comfortable, clean, good beds and bathroom. Airco. Close to the beach. Parking on the inner court (fence always open). Around 50 euro / double / night.
06/12	8AM-9AM: birding around Bayahibe 9AM-11AM: relax. 11-12AM: drive to Punta Cana airport + flight home	

Birding sites

We covered the well-known birding sites of Cano Hondo, Loma de Hoz, Cabo Rojo, Alcoa road, Rabo de Gato and the Zapoten road. Just those sites will get you all target birds. All of those sites are already described in detail in other reports with the necessary GPS coordinates (see Matheve, Gallardy, Willem). Just some personal observations / additions below.

Cano Hondo

The last 9K from Sabana del Mar are not that great but doable in a 2WD car. The hotel at Cano Hondo asks to consume 20 dollars if visiting for a day. As it was raining when we arrived, we asked to have breakfast to kill some waiting time (at 7AM) and spend those dollars, but they said we had to wait at least an hour. While waiting, we saw many people (clients of the hotel) in and around the dining area, some having breakfast. As the rain slowed a bit, we decided to start birding anyway and come back for breakfast. We only came back around 11AM with all target birds seen, and because we didn't have time anymore for breakfast (long drive to Barahona with stop at Salinas de Bani), and nobody was paying any attention to us, we decided to drive out. So in the end, we tried hard to spend money, but they didn't allow us and it didn't fit our schedule. There are 2 birding areas (open spots) for Ridgway's Hawk, and it is important to notice those are separated by the river (= the Cano Hondo), and the bridge crossing is right in the hotel grounds: [19.0565, -69.4545](#) (see also map below), see also Gallardy's report.

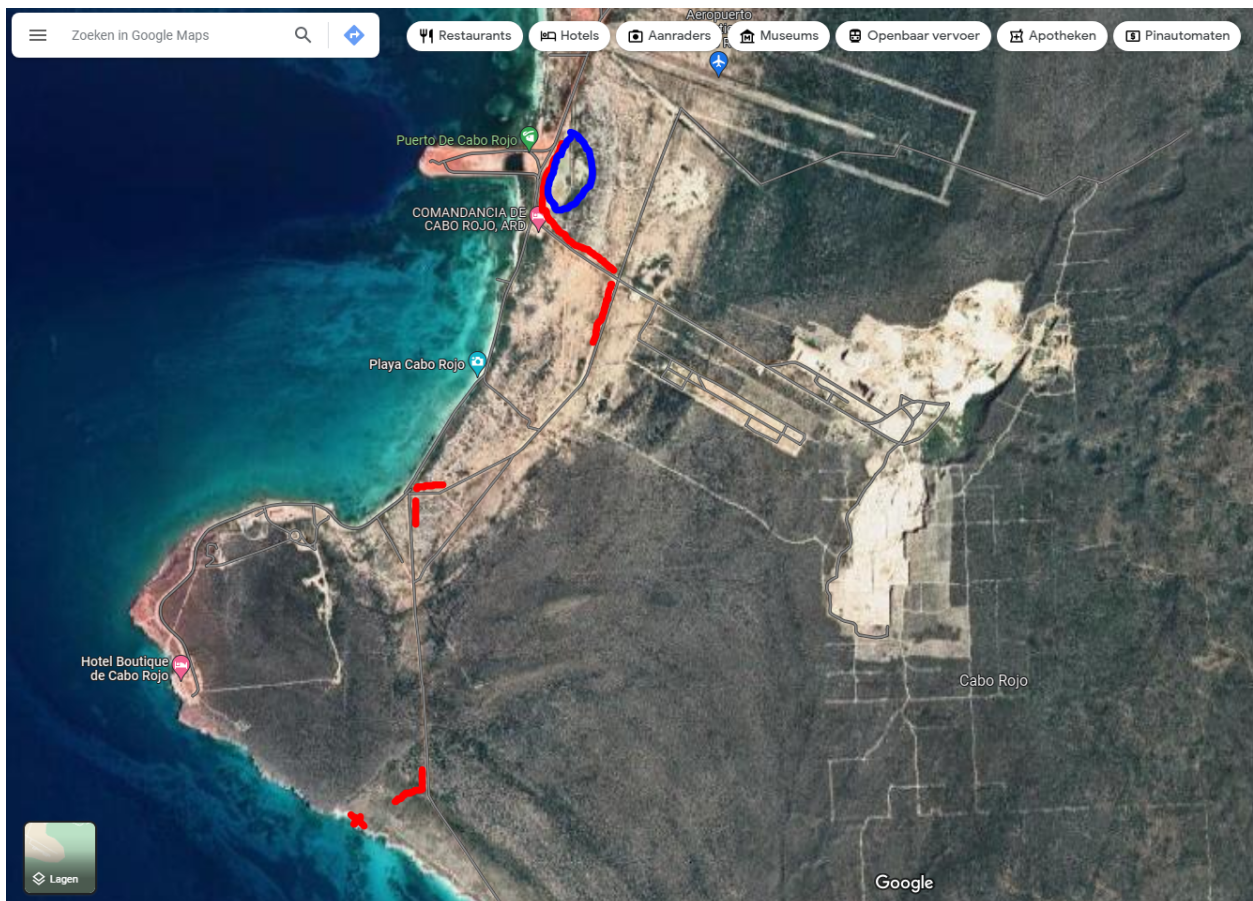


Loma de Hoz

The place is great for a morning's birding. It is strictly 4WD territory. Without a 4WD, be prepared to walk up close to an hour. Doable but not great if e.g. starting after sunset. So pro-tip: start half an hour before sunset.

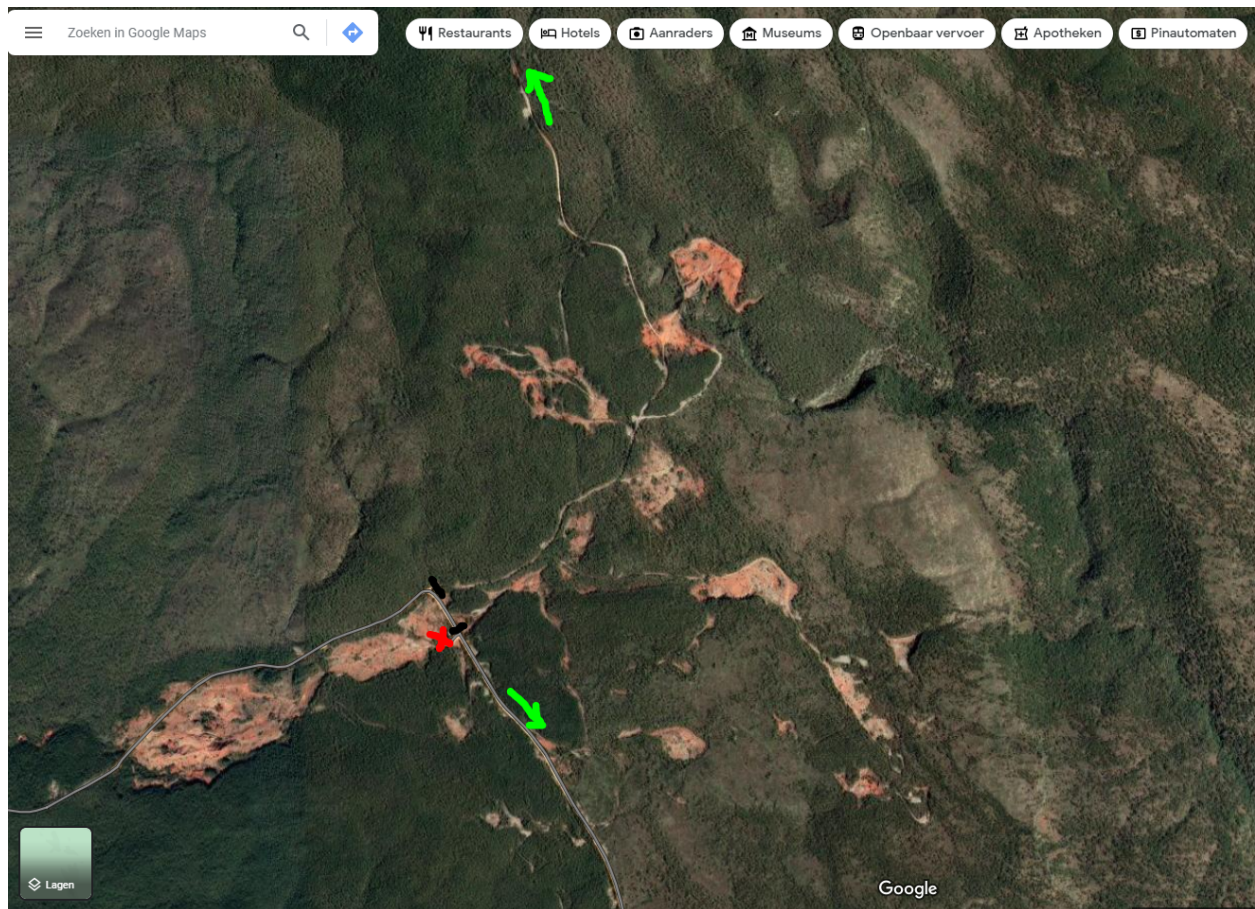
Cabo Rojo

Tropicbirds aren't present this time of year. We had a good swim / snorkel session at the Playa de Abadesa (red cross on the map, follow red driving directions). This is where everybody sees the tropicbirds at the right time of year, and, if lucky, some far-flying Black-capped Petrels. On the way in, there are some wetlands (blue) for shorebirds / waterbirds.



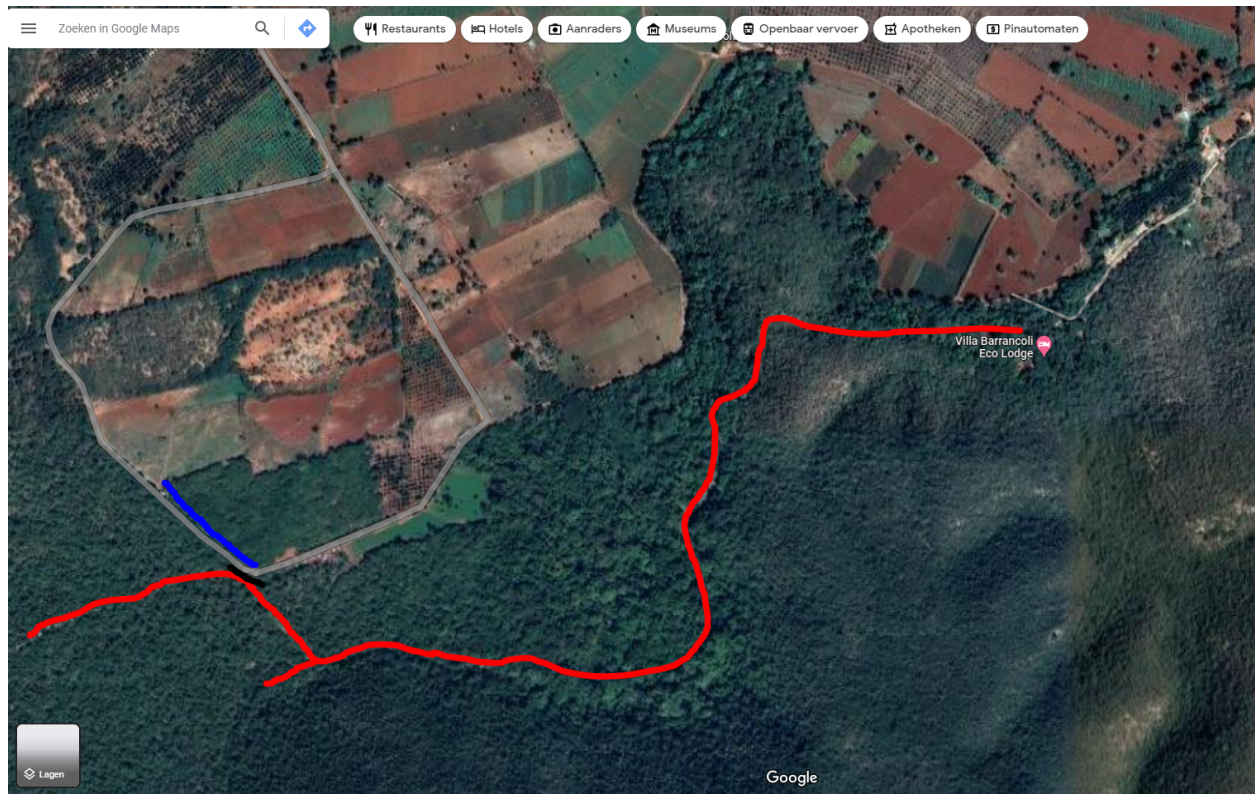
Alcoa road

The road was full of (Dominican Giant) tarantulas at night. Watch out where you drive. The road is very, very good (some minor potholes near Pelempito). At Pelempito (red cross on map), they are attracting birds with water. Palm crows are hanging around, hoping to get some food. The water attracts mainly Yellow-rumped, Palm and Pine Warblers, and, especially on hotter days, Hispaniolan Crossbill. The gates (black on the map) are opened by rangers (or you can open them yourself) and the rangers are very happy to see visitors. You can either go north (green arrow) and eventually even access higher altitude broadleaf forest with e.g. La Selle Thrush (according to rangers), or go South to the mirador de Pelempito (7kms). We didn't venture outside of the Northern and Southern boundaries of this map. Entry (through all gates) is free.



Rabo de Gato

Even though this trail is famous, I feel it can be totally skipped as all birds can be better found at other places, except maybe Key West Quail-dove. For the Quail-dove, we staked out the leaking water pipe (blue on the map, the gate in black is normally always open) and readily had 3 Key West Quail-doves drinking. We also had one (shy, not tape-responsive) Bay-breasted Cuckoo further on the trail, but not much else in terms of target birds. The trail to the South-West on the map peters out, so not worth it.



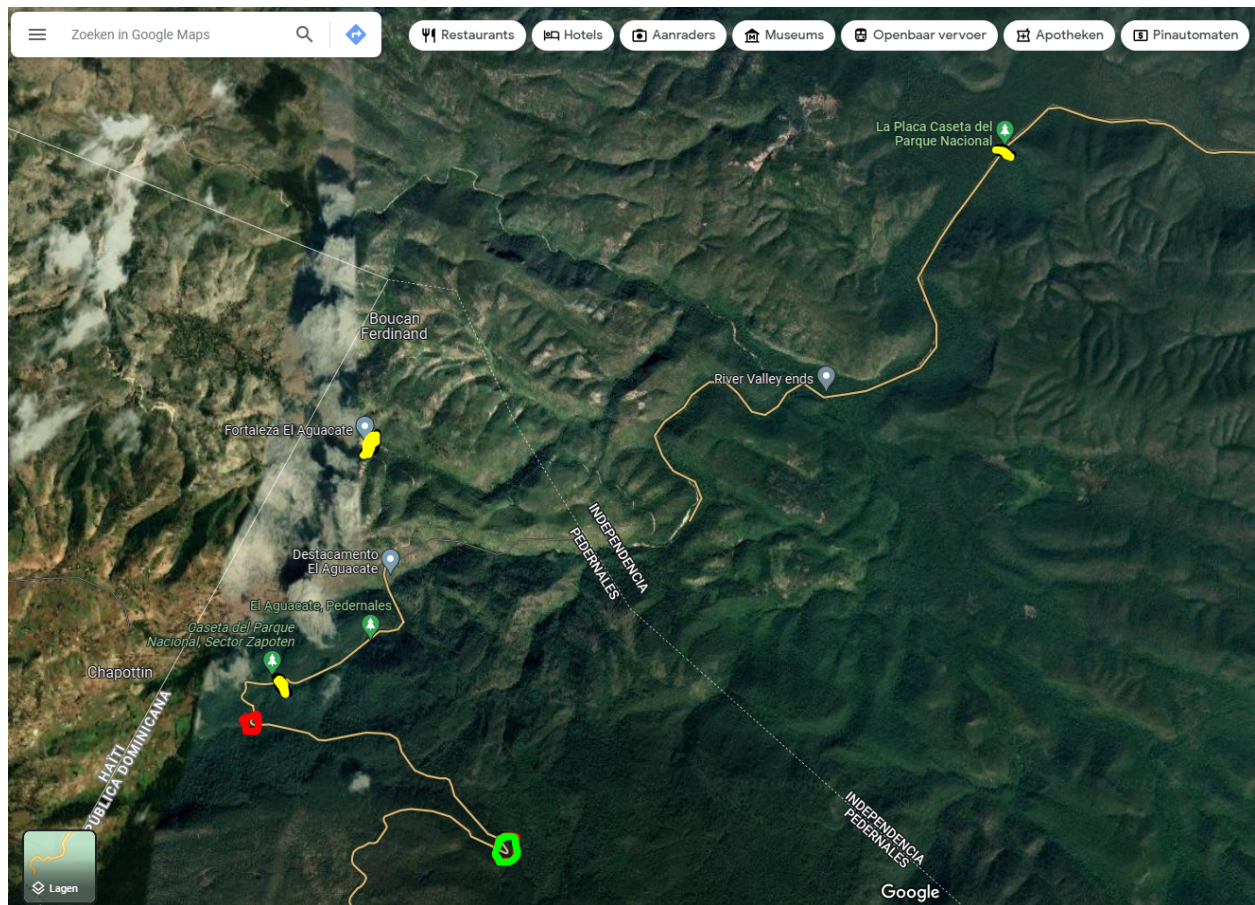
Zapoten road

First of all, technically, you don't need any ticket / any payment. There are 3 gates (yellow on the map below) on this road and whatever the time of day, honking the horn will always result in a friendly ranger / soldier opening the gate for you, be it at 5AM or 5PM.

There are several birding areas worth a go: La Placa, Naranjos and the higher road above the 3rd checkpoint. It is generally believed La Placa is a good site for White-fronted Quail-dove and Bay-breasted Cuckoo, but we didn't walk the trails here (there is an info sign with the trail lay-out behind the hut at the gate). Naranjos is the area with moist, dense lowland forest between La Placa and the second gate. It is worth stopping here for Loggerhead Kingbird and Bay-breasted Cuckoo. See the target bird list for info on stake-outs for these species.

Once above the second gate (right at the Haitian border), we had observations of White-fronted Quail-doves on the road, but most were just below and just above the 3rd gate.

Once above the 3rd gate, it's only a very small distance to the famous La Selle Thrush curve. We didn't have a sniff of the Thrush on the first visit. Probably, we should have walked around slowly at first light (we were just waiting in the curve, hoping the thrush would magically jump on the road in that specific curve), as we readily found 2 thrushes on the straight stretch of road above the curve at dawn during our 2nd visit. The thrushes didn't stay long: 15 minutes after dawn (before 7AM) they already vanished into the woods. We didn't venture any further (more South) than the sharp hairpin curve in green on the map below as all target birds can be found below, but one could search for Crossbills in the higher stretches, and maybe, in the right time of year, for Black-capped Petrels at their nesting holes.



Some secondary areas where visited / birded for less than an hour: random first stop between Punta Cana and Cano Hondo (nothing special / unique), Salinas de Bani between Santo Domingo and Barahona (mainly waders / terns), Laguna de Oviedo between Barahona to Pedernales (American Flamingo) and Bayahibe (last morning, for Pearly-eyed Thrasher).

Target birds

The bird list of Hispaniola has a very strong island character: in terms of number of species, it's strongly impoverished, and you won't see more than 30-40 species in a day (and for that, you will have to combine forest birding with a wetland site that holds some waders). We had respectively 17 (towards Cano Hondo), 40 (Cano Hondo + Salinas de Bani), 40 (Loma de Hoz + Cabo Rojo), 24 (Alco rd), 37 (Rabo de Gato + agricultural area), 18 (Zapoten road) and 8 (Zapoten revisited) species, but ofcourse we didn't push hard anymore in the end. Hispaniola does, however, make up the low number with a high number of endemics.

There is that one endemic that is only present in Haiti: Grey-crowned (Palm)-Tanager. In theory, one can try to arrange a visit, but in practice it's something nobody, even Haitians, would recommend with the current sad state of affairs (2022). If you are really die-hard, the best chance (safety-wise) would be to go from Pedernales, cross the border, ride towards Jacmel close to the coast, see the bird, sleep somewhere in a hotel near the coast, and come back the next day (all in daylight, don't ever drive at night). We considered something like this some years ago, but we never thought about it on this trip.

Also, the Dominican itinerary was already time-consuming: we had 7 days and we needed almost all of our time to clean up...

Birds below are either **ENDEMIC**, near-endemic or *secondary targets*. Birds in [brackets] were not encountered.

West-indian Whistling-duck

Not encountered - simply because we didn't try. Not even near Bayahibe or Punta Cana. The obvious place is the botanical garden in Santo Domingo, but that would be a time-consuming detour with all the traffic in and around the capital. I have already seen this bird in Cuba.

[Antillean Nighthawk - *Chordeiles gundlachii* - near-ENDEMIC]

Not present in November / December. Best is somewhere in May-August (outside of the regular birding season). I don't know when the first birds will start appearing (April?)

Least Poorwill - *Siphonorhis brewsteri* - ENDEMIC

A sometimes tricky bird: often heard but they tend to fly above / through dense acacia scrub and thus are hard to see. I was lucky to see one perched in the garden of Villa Barrancoli: [18.315, -71.576](#). It's best to scout the garden in daylight. You get easily to the barbed wire at the end of the garden, but not much further.



*[Chuck-will's-widow - *Antrostomus carolinensis*]*

Not encountered. I don't know if this bird is vocal in the Dominican Republic. Mostly seen at stake-outs in daylight. Should be possible around Puerto Escondido

Hispaniolan Nightjar - *Antrostomus ekmani* - ENDEMIC

An easy-to-connect-with nightjar, e.g. on the road around the Avocado plantations NW of Puerto Escondido: [18.348, -71.600](#). They didn't sit on the road though, and while they were very tape-responsive (one tried to crash-land in a bush next to us, after circling our heads for quite some time, in the torchlight), they didn't want to be perched close to us.

*[Northern Potoo - *Nyctibius jamaicensis*]*

This one should be on the fence posts or trees in the Avocado plantations. The thing is, we could have overlooked it easily. There are a zillion fence posts and we didn't exactly scan the trees very well. And we only (quickly) scanned on the way to Zapoten and during night birding. Careful scanning (day or night) of those fence posts and roadside trees could result in finding this bird. We tried to entice them with sound, but they probably aren't vocal in December.

Antillean Palm Swift - *Chaetura martinica* - near-ENDEMIC

Ssp. *phoenicobia* on Hispaniola. The other ssp. *iradii* occurs on Cuba. Very, very common throughout, mainly around palms, in disturbed / agricultural areas.

Hispaniolan Mango - *Anthracothonax dominicus* - ENDEMIC

We connected twice with this species: once on a random stop an hour on the road between Punta Cana and Cano Hondo, and once at Cano Hondo near the Ridgway's hawk stake-out: [19.056, -69.458](#). We (unfortunately) didn't see any nice colored males...

Vervain Hummingbird - *Mellisuga minima* - ENDEMIC

Only seen well at the flowering bush just next to the dining area at Villa Barrancoli: [18.316, -71.577](#). A tiny hummer, easy to miss when not staking out a preferred feeding bush.

Hispaniolan Emerald - *Riccordia swainsonii* - ENDEMIC

Seen on the Alcoa road near La Charca, and Zapoten road just above the La Selle Thrush corner. Seems to prefer higher elevations.

[Mangrove Cuckoo - *Coccyzus minor*]

Not encountered. A bit of a boogey-bird by now for me, after having missed it in Cuba.

Bay-breasted Cuckoo - *Coccyzus ruficularis* - ENDEMIC

One silent sneaky bird on the Rabo de Gato trail that didn't react to playback, and one at a site they call 'la mina' (there is a kind of quarry there), that was very tape-responsive [18.329, -71.697](#). That site is a bit down from the second checkpoint (the one at the very border with Haiti). One of the trickier endemics.



Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo - *Coccyzus longirostris* - ENDEMIC

A sneaky bird, but encountered in almost all sites eventually.

Plain Pigeon - *Patagioenas inornata*

A large pigeon occurring on Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. A bird I didn't try to see in Cuba, and is pleasantly common at Cano Hondo, e.g. photographed here: [19.055, -69.455](#). Seen well perched in a tree at close distance. The area around Villa Barrancoli is another good spot to see this species.

White-fronted Quail-Dove - *Geotrygon leucometopia* - ENDEMIC

A bird that proved to be nearly impossible to connect with on the Rabo de Gato trail. However, we had luck on our side as we saw no less than 3 birds walking along the Zapoten road, mostly around the 3rd checkpoint. One flushed on the 4th: [18.311, -71.710](#), and 2 separate birds seen walking on the road below the highest checkpoint: [18.316, -71.706](#) and [18.315, -71.709](#). Please note that the walking birds were seen around 7AM (early morning), at a time most birders tend to bird around the La Selle Thrush corner...



Key West Quail-dove

A species touted to only occur at / near Rabo de Gato, where we found 3 birds near the leaking water pipe: [18.313, -71.589](#). They came to drink in the morning. We also saw this species a bit unexpectedly walking on the lower slopes of the Zapoten road: [18.326, -71.681](#).



[White-tailed Tropicbird - Phaethon lepturus]

Not encountered. Breeds on the rocks near Cabo Rojo, but December is not the right season to see this species.

[Black-capped Petrel - Pterodroma hasitata - ENDEMIC]

Not encountered. We contacted a Petrel researcher, who told us birds inspect nest holes before 15th of November, and then disperse in the open sea, before returning at the beginning of January to visit the nest holes and start breeding. However, it seems like at least one report (Rockjumper December 2018) mentions seeing the petrels from Cabo Rojo, beginning of December (note that many other reports, either December or Feb-March, don't mention the bird at all...! But anyway, Feb-April should be the best timeframe for scanning from e.g. Cabo Rojo...). Contact info of the researcher can be requested (I won't share it here).

Sharp-shinned Hawk - Accipiter striatus

Ssp. striatus. Endemic ssp. in Hispaniola. Seen once hunting in the avocado plantations near Puerto Escondido.

Ridgway's Hawk - Buteo ridgwayi - ENDEMIC

One of the rarest and most sought-after endemics. There are two pastures / stake-outs where one should be able to connect with this bird (the one where we didn't find it is here: [19.0561, -69.456](#)). Birds around Punta Cana are re-introduced. Seen at the stake-out in Cano hondo: [19.056, -69.457](#). Note that both stake outs are separated by the river. You can cross it with wet feet, or cross the bridge in the hotel compound.



Ashy-faced Owl - *Tyto glaucops* - ENDEMIC

A beautiful Tyto, easily encountered along the road to Cano Hondo (tape-responsive), at least if you hit the right owl at the right time: [19.049, -69.411](#).



Stygian Owl

A widespread species, but the Alcoa road seems to be a good place for this bird: [18.119, -71.617](#) (the whole stretch between the two big curves is very good for the owl). Seen in the morning.



Hispaniolan Trogon - *Priotelus roseigaster* - ENDEMIC

Only seen (but easily seen) on the Zapoten road, just above La Selle Thrush corner.

Broad-billed Tody - *Todus subulatus* - ENDEMIC

Common by voice in the lower areas.

Narrow-billed Tody - *Todus angustirostris* - ENDEMIC

Even more common than Broad-billed, probably higher up the mountains later in the year.

Antillean Piculet - *Nesocittes micromegas* - ENDEMIC

Common by voice in all sites. Takes a bit more effort to see (well).

Hispaniolan Woodpecker - *Melanerpes striatus* - ENDEMIC

Very, very common throughout.

Hispaniolan Amazon - *Amazona ventralis* - ENDEMIC

Some birds at the Alcoa road, seen perched on the treetops near Pelempito: [18.128, -71.552](#). Also some heard on the Zapoten road. Nowhere common it seems.

Hispaniolan Parakeet - *Psittacara chloropterus* - ENDEMIC

A single small group perched in a fruiting tree on the Rabo de Gato trail: [18.311, -71.585](#). The easiest place is probably the botanical garden in Santo Domingo, but as we saw them on the Rabo de Gato trail, we didn't have to go there. Given we didn't hear any on the Alcoa road / Zapoten, can be tricky to see...



Greater Antillean Elaenia - *Elaenia fallax* - near-ENDEMIC

Ssp Cherriei. The other ssp. occurs in Jamaica. Seen only once, on the Alcoa road: [18.152, -71.550](#). Fairly inconspicuous but probably more vocal / easier to see in the breeding season.

Hispaniolan Pewee - *Contopus hispaniolensis* - ENDEMIC

Only twice, both on the Rabo de Gato trail. Fairly inconspicuous. A confiding individual photographed here: [18.313, -71.589](#).

Hispaniolan Loggerhead Kingbird - ENDEMIC

An IOC split (ssp. gabbii), so better to see this rather uncommon bird. Seen after playback at a stake-out (quite territorial, easily taped in), middle elevations of the Zapoten road: [18.331, -71.676](#).



Stolid Flycatcher - *Myiarchus stolidus* - near-ENDEMIC

Ssp. dominicensis. The other ssp. occurs in Jamaica. The only *Myiarchus* on Hispaniola. Pretty common by voice at Alcoa road, Rabo de Gato and Zapoten.

Flat-billed Vireo - *Vireo nanus* - ENDEMIC

Common in good habitat, e.g. Loma de hoz, the Rabo de Gato trail and high up on the Zapoten road.

Hispaniolan Palm Crow - *Corvus palmarum* - ENDEMIC

A localized endemic. The most reliable site is at Pelempito, where a bit of food can easily bring down a dozen birds that give fantastic views.

White-necked Crow - *Corvus leucognaphalus* - ENDEMIC

Easily found by voice, but quite retreating. Encountered at Loma de Hoz and around Villa Barrancoli, but more heard than seen..

Palmchat - *Dulus dominicus* - ENDEMIC

Very, very common throughout all habitats and places but the higher altitudes.

Golden Swallow - *Tachycineta euchrysea* - ENDEMIC

A beautiful swallow, only found nowadays in the mountains of the Hispaniola (nominate in Jamaica considered extinct). Unfortunately the birds we encountered at the Alcoa road were invariably flying high and never hung around too long: [18.145, -71.548](#). Best picked up by voice when flying over. For those that want perched views, try to find the breeding site as in the report of Hesse (we didn't try).

[Caribbean Martin - *Progne dominicensis* - near ENDEMIC]

Not encountered. A summer breeder so not present in December. Occurs Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Lesser Antilles. Congener of Cuban Martin.

Pearly-eyed Thrasher - *Margarops fuscatus* - near-ENDEMIC

Nominate. Occurs in the Bahamas, Puerto Rico (where very common) and some islands in the Lesser Antilles. An opportunistic last-minuted check on ebird revealed that birds should be present at Bayahibe, where we stayed the last night: [18.373, -68.839](#). Should also be quite easy around Punta Cana.

Rufous-throated Solitaire - *Myadestes genibarbis* - near-ENDEMIC

Ss. montanus (Dominican Republic). Also occurs in Jamaica and some islands in the Lesser Antilles. Heard at Loma de Hoz, Alcoa road (lower parts) and finally seen well at Zapoten. It's a bit hard to localize the sound.

[Bicknell's Thrush - *Catharus bicknelli*]

While a slightly smaller bird hopping around with the La Selle Thrushes could have been a Bicknell's, we can't be sure, as there wasn't enough light to see more than silhouettes, and as quickly as it arrived, it disappeared. Most people see it together with La Selle Thrush. A tricky bird to see (well) even in the breeding areas.

La Selle Thrush - *Turdus swalesi* - ENDEMIC

This bird gave us a run for our money. Our first morning we didn't get any luck with this bird. This was not how it should be, according to Kate. She told us that people almost never miss it on the road, in the La Selle Thrush curve. Maybe we were a bit too static on the first try, staking out the curve from below. The second day, we stood above the curve, where there is a good view on a much longer stretch of road, as

well as on the curve. This time, we saw 2 birds hopping on the road above us: [18.309, -71.708](#). Once quickly disappeared, but the other one lingered around just long enough so I could photograph it in something you can only describe as first light (ISO 64000 or something, with 1/20th). 10-15 minutes after first visual contact, we didn't have any sniff of the thrush anymore...



Hispaniolan Crossbill - *Loxia megaplaga* - ENDEMIC

A tricky bird to find, unless (like we experienced) the rangers lure it down with water at Pelempito. We only had some (silent) female birds at Pelempito, that were sitting in the trees around but didn't even come down to drink: [18.128, -71.553](#). We didn't search for this bird away from the drinking place at either Alcoa or Zapoten (where we didn't venture far up the road) so we don't know how hard it is...



Antillean Siskin - *Spinus dominicensis* - ENDEMIC

Strictly confined to Hispaniola. Common by voice in areas with pines (e.g. Alcoa road, parts of Zapoten road). Tape-responsive but only to the high 'schwee' call that's not in the Merlin app, but is to be found here: <https://xeno-canto.org/154226> . Photographed on the Alcoa road: [18.143, -71.545](#) where taped in, and the Zapoten road: [18.323, -71.696](#) where feeding in roadside scrub.

Antillean Euphonia - Chlorophonia musica - Near- ENDEMIC

Found on Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and some Lesser Antilles. Common by voice, e.g. Rabo de Gato and Zapoten road.

Western Chat-Tanager - Calyptophilus tertius - ENDEMIC

Easily seen at dawn on the Alcoa road at the big curve: [18.113, -71.612](#), and seen without trying at the Zapoten road. Some people miss this one, but I can't figure out why.

Eastern Chat-Tanager - Calyptophilus frugivorus - ENDEMIC

Only seen at Loma de Hoz, were reasonably common, we tried first here and encountered more birds spontaneously higher up: [18.180, -71.275](#). A pain however to take photographs of.



Black-crowned Tanager - Phaenicophilus palmarum - ENDEMIC

Very common throughout. Very good-looking as well.

Green-tailed Warbler - Microligea palustris - ENDEMIC

Very common in appropriate habitat / range, e.g. Loma de Hoz, Zapoten.

White-winged Warbler - Xenoligea montana - ENDEMIC

Only encountered on the Zapoten road above the La Selle Thrush corner, where we saw it fairly easily: [18.309, -71.706](#). A strict highland species. Could be tricky, but shouldn't be too hard either.

Hispaniolan Spindalis - Spindalis dominicensis - ENDEMIC

Easy to hear, a bit more tricky to see but encountered at Loma de Hoz and on the Zapoten road. The drab female was seen twice as much as the splendid male...



Hispaniolan Oriole - *Icterus dominicensis* - ENDEMIC

Quite a tricky bird to encounter. Only seen once when a targeted search delivered one bird in agricultural fields near Puerto Escondido: [18.318, -71.588](#). A bird best sought outside of the forest.

Greater Antillean Bullfinch - *Melopyrrha violacea* - near-ENDEMIC

A bird found in the Bahamas, Hispaniola and Jamaica. Ssp. affinis on Hispaniola. Fairly common, encountered on a random stop between Punta Cana and Cano Hondo, at Loma de hoz and Zapoten.

