

Trip Report

Guatemala

October 18- November 19, 2022

Overview and Acknowledgements

Guatemala is a wonderful country for birdwatching. Although there are no country endemics, there is a wide variety of special birds (i.e. Horned Guan, Pink-headed Warbler, Slender Sheartail and others) that are perhaps best seen within its borders. Nevertheless, the country seems to be underbirded, perhaps due to the perception of it being dangerous with a poor infrastructure. Although I was cautioned about safety at the Rostro Maya trail and at Mirador Rey Tepepul, I perceived no great threat. In fact, the people I met at both sites were extremely friendly, as was the case throughout the country. Independent travel proved to be straightforward, as it was easy and inexpensive to find some form of transportation heading where I needed to go. Even the chicken buses I took were not overcrowded, although leg room left much to be desired. Anyone with a bit of experience traveling independently can have a wonderful time birding in Guatemala, just as I did.

I would like to thank several people for providing advice and assistance that certainly enhanced my trip. John Cahill, owner of Xikanel Birding Adventures (www.xikanel.com) answered my frequent questions about birding sites around the country, despite the fact I had not booked his services. John lives near Cobán, and offered to join me on my day trip to the Chajbaoc Reserve, picking me up at 5 am at my hotel for the short drive to the reserve. Unbeknownst to me prior to meeting him, John has sites for Bearded Screech-Owl and Greater Swallow-tailed Swift near his house. Upon learning this, I unfortunately didn't have any flexibility in the days I had left in Guatemala, so I was unable to arrange to see them. A reason to return! John can be contacted by email at xikanel@gmail.com and Whatsapp at +502 4066 6185.

Josue De Leon Lux (email: josuedeleonlux@gmail.com and Whatsapp +502 3068 8988) and his brother Lester (Whatsapp +502 5925 4919) are birding guides, both living in Godínez near Lake Atitlan. I had contacted Josue before leaving home about the possibility of arranging a trip to see Belted Flycatcher, and he provided advice about other birding sites as well. I ended up bumping into Josue while he was guiding a couple from Belgium, first at the Hotel Tolimán, and then again at IMAP and Los Tarrales. Josue was unavailable to guide me at his suggested

site for Belted Flycatcher at Los Robles, but Lester agreed to meet me and take me around. Both Josue and Lester are excellent guides, patient, friendly and very knowledgeable. Both speak flawless English. Esteban Matias is definitely the go-to person to show birders around the Cuchumatanes mountains and tease the avian riches out of this remote area. Esteban is a great guide and very passionate about his birds. Esteban can be contacted via email (esteban.matias@hotmail.com) or Whatsapp (+502 5381 0540). He doesn't speak English, so communication should be in Spanish.

I hope the information in this trip report will be useful for anyone wishing to plan and organize an independent birding trip to Guatemala. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any additional assistance.

Mike Moore
moore_travel@hotmail.com

Itinerary

Wed. Oct. 19	Flew American Airlines from Montreal to Guatemala City via Miami. Took shuttle from the airport to Antigua. Night at Hostal El Extranjero.
Thurs. Oct. 20	Birding at Finca El Pilar. Night at Hostal El Extranjero.
Fri. Oct. 21	Birding at Finca El Pilar. Night at Hostal El Extranjero.
Sat. Oct. 22	Chicken bus to the Carretera Panamericana. Flagged down a minibus to Quetzaltenango. Chicken bus to Zunil. Taxi to Fuentes Georginas. Time for birding along the access road in the afternoon in heavy fog. Night at Fuentes Georginas.
Sun. Oct. 23	Birding the ridge trail in the morning. Birding along the access road in the afternoon in heavy fog. Night at Fuentes Georginas.
Mon. Oct. 24	Birding the ridge trail in the morning. Birding along the access road in the afternoon in heavy fog. Night at Fuentes Georginas.
Tues. Oct. 25	Pre-arranged taxi didn't bother to show up in the morning. Guard called a taxi for me to return to Zunil. Chicken bus to Quetzaltenango. Night at Mucha Arte Hotel.
Wed. Oct. 26	Day in Quetzaltenango. Rum distillery tour at Casa Botran was fully booked unfortunately. Night at Mucha Arte Hotel.
Thurs. Oct. 27	Picked up rental car before noon. Roughly 125 km drive to Chiabal took 6.5 hours in horrible traffic. Met Esteban Matias at dusk and drove to his guesthouse. Night birding up from guesthouse, finding Mexican Whip-poor-will.

Fri. Oct. 28	Full day visit to birding sites in the Cuchumatanes mountains with Esteban Matias. Stayed at Esteban's guesthouse.
Sat. Oct. 29	Early departure at 5:20 am made for a quicker return to Quetzaltenango. Dropped off rental car, and walked to nearby bus terminal. Chicken bus to San Pedro La Laguna. Night at Hotel Adulam.
Sun. Oct. 30	Tuktuk to the start of Rostro Maya trail. Birding for three hours and returned to Hotel Adulam to check out. Long walk to dock and took a launch to Santiago Atitlan. Night at Hotel y Restaurante La Estrella.
Mon. Oct. 31	Tuktuk to Mirador Rey Tepepul. Birding the area for about six hours. Flagged down pickup to return to Santiago Atitlan. Night at Hotel y Restaurante La Estrella.
Tues. Nov. 1	Tuktuk to Mirador Rey Tepepul. Birding the area for about six hours. Flagged down pickup to return to Santiago Atitlan. Night at Hotel y Restaurante La Estrella.
Wed. Nov. 2	Flagged down chicken bus to San Lucas Tolimán. Lunch and visit to garden at Hotel Tolimán. Tuktuk to IMAP. Ride back to San Lucas Tolimán. Night at Posada Los Volcanes.
Thurs. Nov. 3	Visit to tanager spot with Lester in morning. Lunch and visit to garden at Hotel Tolimán. Night at Posada Los Volcanes.
Fri. Nov. 4	Early morning minibus heading south and was dropped off at entrance road to Los Tarrales. Morning birding on Rinconada trail. Afternoon washed out by rain. Night at Los Tarrales.
Sat. Nov. 5	Full day of birding at Los Tarrales. Morning and afternoon on Rinconada trail. Mid-day walk on Lagoon trail. Night at Los Tarrales.
Sun. Nov. 6	Morning hike on Rinconada trail before checkout. Flagged down minibus back to San Lucas Tolimán. Pickup truck to Santiago Atitlan, being dropped off at short access road to Hotel Bambú. Lunch and visit to gardens at Hotel Bambú. Walked to ferry dock and took launch to Panajachel. Night at Hotel El Amigo.
Mon. Nov. 7	Early minibus to Godínez and tuktuk to Aldea Los Robles where met up with Lester. Morning birding at Los Robles, mainly for Belted Flycatcher. Tuktuk back to Godínez and minibus to Panajachel. Night at Hotel El Amigo.

Tues. Nov. 8	Walked over to Hotel Atitlan to have breakfast and visit their garden. Launch to San Marcos La Laguna to meet up with friends for the day. Late afternoon launch back to Panajachel. Night at Hotel El Amigo.
Wed. Nov. 9	Shuttle to Cobán, taking all day. Night at Hotel Matalbatz.
Thurs. Nov. 10	5 am pickup at Hotel Matalbatz by John Cahill and short drive to Chajbaoc Reserve. Morning birding on trails until about noon. Got a lift back to town from the owner, Max Noack. Night at Hotel Matalbatz.
Fri. Nov. 11	Minibus to San Cristobal Verapaz. Walked to Laguna Chichoj to track down Ruddy Crake and White-throated Flycatcher. Returned on the minibus, but hopped off in Santa Cruz Verapaz and caught a waiting bus heading to Guatemala City. Bus broke down, but eventually limped along and I got off at Ranchitos del Quetzal. Night at Ranchitos del Quetzal.
Sat. Nov. 12	Full day of birding at Ranchitos del Quetzal. Night at Ranchitos del Quetzal.
Sun. Nov. 13	Morning visit to nearby Biotopo del Quetzal. Afternoon on the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal. Night at Ranchitos del Quetzal.
Mon. Nov. 14	Flagged down a chicken bus and got dropped off at the start of the Finca Santa Rosa road. Birding along the road until just before noon when rain threatened. Flagged down minibus and got dropped off back at Ranchitos where I walked the loop trail in the afternoon. Night at Ranchitos del Quetzal.
Tues. Nov. 15	Birding in the morning in the open areas around the buildings at Ranchitos del Quetzal. Flagged down a minibus heading in the direction of Guatemala City, and got dropped off at the big intersection called El Rancho. Walked to the far end of El Rancho and found a bus to take me to the town of Santa Cruz. Minibus to Cabañas and tuktuk to El Arenal. Found the reserve "office" and arranged for a motorbike to take me to the Heloderma Reserve. Afternoon birding along the short loop trail. Night at the station in the Heloderma Reserve.
Wed. Nov. 16	Full day of birding around the Heloderma Reserve with park guard Gilberto Salazar. Night at the station in the Heloderma Reserve.

- Thurs. Nov. 17 Birding until 9 am and then given a lift by motorbike back to the Panamericana highway at El Jícaro. Flagged down bus to Guatemala City. Taxi to Mariana's Petit Hotel. Night at Mariana's Petit Hotel.
- Fri. Nov. 18 Morning visit to Popol Vuh Museum. Afternoon hanging out at Mariana's Petit Hotel, then a taxi to airport.
- Sat. Nov. 19 Early morning flight at 01³⁰ to Montreal on United Airlines via Washington D.C.

Accommodations

My schedule was somewhat flexible, and the only bookings I had made in advance of leaving home were in Antigua at the Hostal El Extranjero, Fuentes Georginas and at Los Tarrales. While in country, I did often make bookings for the next place a day or two in advance using booking.com, but occasionally showed up without any advance bookings. Simple, relatively inexpensive single rooms were pretty similar in price and amenities from town to town. I was very pleased with three things in particular. Firstly, every place I stayed at provided safe, purified drinking water, usually from large dispensers, making it easy to fill up my water bottle and, even more importantly, cutting down on plastic waste. I didn't have to buy a single bottle of water for my whole trip. Secondly, hot water for showers was present and reliable virtually everywhere, and it really was hot, not like elsewhere where "hot water" is advertised and what you get is a dribble of water that is barely lukewarm. Thirdly, free wifi was present everywhere, even in the simplest places.

Below is a list of the places where I stayed, and a brief note about each. I didn't keep track of the cost of every place, but they typically ranged from the equivalent of about USD 20-30 per night. For up-to-date pricing, almost all can be found on booking.com, at least at the time of my visit.

Antigua - Hostal El Extranjero

Much confusion at my arrival where, at the hostel's address, I found a small, locked door, no sign, and no sign of life. I had the phone number of the hostel, but no minutes on my phone (relying on free wifi), so I walked over to a nearby hotel where I got the person at reception to call. The way the Hostal El Extranjero works is that they send you a code for both the front door and your room via Whatsapp, but nothing had been sent to me before I left home and lost internet access. The owners had never communicated that this was the procedure, so it initially caused a lot of confusion, but once I had the codes, everything was fine. The place is small, and there are no workers on site unless someone drops by to

clean. The room was simple, clean and comfortable.

Fuentes Georginas

There are nine cabins at Fuentes Georginas, and if planning your visit over a weekend, it would be a good idea to book in advance. As I was arriving on a Saturday, I had sent an email to what proved to be the incorrect person, asking for a reservation for three nights. Not hearing anything back, I showed up at the gate to be told that the place was full. I asked to be allowed in to talk to the manager, only to find that my name was in the reservations book and that my reservation had been, in fact, received. Relieved that it was all a big misunderstanding, I was directed to cabin #9 which, along with cabin #8, is accessed via a staircase below the dining area. These two cabins are more secluded than the others, and would be my choice if I were to ever go back.

The cabins are actually rather spartan and dark, but they contain two beds and plenty of sheets and blankets against the cold at night. Each cabin has a separate room where there is an in-house stone pool which you can fill up with hot water from the hot springs for your own private soak. As there is no hot water in the showers, this proved to be very useful at night to soothe the muscles and relax prior to going to bed. There is a fireplace in each cabin, and wood, including small pieces of kindling to start a fire, is provided. Unfortunately, the provided matches are of such poor quality that they go out less than one second after lighting. It was impossible even to light a piece of paper. Therefore, if a fire is desired, bring a lighter or better matches! A simple restaurant is on site with a few choices on the limited menu. On the weekend, vendors sell a wide range of products since this is the busy time when lots of Guatemalans visit the baths, but during the week it seems the booths are closed. I had read that cabins were around Q250, but this must have been the per person price as they require a minimum of two people. I believe I paid around Q 600 for a night. Reservations can be made by contacting Don Tito at +502 5704 2959.

Quetzaltenango - Mucha Arte Hotel

A wonderful base for Quetzaltenango. Rooms are large, comfortable, spotlessly clean, and furnished with style and grace. Breakfast is included. Highly recommended.

Chiabal - Cuchumatanes

I stayed at Esteban's guesthouse which is on the property next to his house. There is one big room, which includes one big bed, although I did notice a fold-up mattress as well tucked away in the corner. It is more like an apartment as there is a fridge and a stove for cooking, so being self-sufficient foodwise is possible, which is not a bad thing since the only place to eat, other than roadside stalls, is a restaurant about a ten-minute drive out of town on the highway. There apparently is hot water in the shower, which I only found out about afterwards, as there is a special mechanism to activate the hot water. The charge was USD 35 per night.

San Pedro La Laguna - Hotel Adulam

This was a very nice hotel. The place seems quite new. Rooms were clean and very comfortable, and I paid Q 150 for a night. Located on the outskirts of the "party zone", so rather quiet which was what I wanted. There was also a nice view of the lake - ask for a room in the upper corner. Recommended.

Santiago Atitlan - Hotel y Restaurante La Estrella

A simple place that proved to be a good spot in Santiago Atitlan. Rooms were Q 150 per night. A small upper patio had nice views over the lake. A nice place. I did not eat at the restaurant.

San Lucas Toliman - Posada Los Volcanes

A very good, inexpensive base for San Lucas Tolimán. Clean, comfortable rooms were less than Q 100 per night if I remember correctly.

Los Tarrales - Las Chachas

At Los Tarrales, there are several buildings containing multiple rooms. I stayed in a wonderful room in Las Chachas. The room was very comfortable and furnished with care and a touch of old-world charm. All rooms at Los Tarrales seem to be priced equally at USD 47 per night. I have read comments from others who complained about the cost at Los Tarrales. In my opinion, these complaints are unfounded as I found the room, and corresponding access to great habitat, to be good value for the money, especially compared to other "ecotourist" lodges elsewhere. Bookings are easily made at www.tarralesreserve.com, the lodge's website. Meals were USD 15 apiece, served buffet style, and were very well prepared. Costs can add up I suppose if you need transportation to the upper regions or if the in-house birding guide is hired, but I was simply self-guiding mainly on the Rinconada trail.

Panajachel - Hotel El Amigo

In Panajachel, I was looking for a place a bit outside of the busy part of town, yet with convenient access to transportation options and restaurants. Panajachel is not huge, and many places would have fit my needs, but I settled on the Hotel El Amigo in the northern part of town just off Calle Principal. The room was acceptable, but a bit dark with a somewhat uncomfortable bed. Wifi was very problematic. At something like Q 150 per night, it wasn't great value, but not bad overall.

Cobán - Hotel Matalbatz

There didn't seem to be too many options in Cobán, and the Hotel Matalbatz was pretty good. A clean, comfortable room was around Q 250. Breakfast was included, and they even offered to prepare a packed-breakfast at 5 am on the morning I visited the Chajbaoc Reserve.

Ranchitos del Quetzal

Rooms were Q 250 per night. The bed was fine, but the room itself had little in creature comforts. The worst part was that the hot water in the shower was impossible to regulate. It either came out so scalding hot that you risked first degree burns, or so cold as to induce hypothermia. For what you get, it isn't worth Q 250 per night, but you are a captive audience. The road noise is really bad and the accommodations are directly above a curve along the Panamericana, and the big trucks create an enormous racket when using their air brakes. Good quality earplugs are definitely needed here. There is a small restaurant with a limited menu, but the food is decent. If it's quiet, it would be prudent to make sure food is available and not just show up expecting to be fed after dusk.

Heloderma Reserve

There is a small station in the reserve with two rooms with simple beds. A bathroom with shower and toilet is present, and a large lounge area provides some space to relax, although the comfort of the chairs leaves something to be desired. A fridge is present for keeping food/drinks cool, and there is an outside cooking area with a gas stove for preparing food. Meals can be arranged in the nearby community and brought up to the station only for large groups of six or more people, and I was advised of this in advance. I thus purchased enough supplies to keep myself alive for a couple of days. The outside kitchen is pretty well stocked with cooking equipment and cutlery. I was unsure about the availability of drinking water, but a large dispenser of purified water was present. It was a very

comfortable set up, and I enjoyed my stay here immensely, totally alone at night. A bed and use of the facilities was Q 150 per night. Reservations must be made in advance and can be facilitated by contacting Johanna Gil via Whatsapp at +502 3040 8734.

Guatemala City - Mariana's Petit Hotel

I was looking for a place near the airport prior to my flight home, and booked a room at Mariana's Petit Hotel which is within a gated community. In order to enter the complex, the taxi driver had to provide his documentation. Make sure you have the address as there is no sign for the hotel. The rooms are within the family home which is very warm and welcoming. The owners couldn't have been more helpful and charming, and the room was spotless and very comfortable. A hearty breakfast is included, as is an airport shuttle. A night was Q 310. Due to the fact that the hotel is within a gated community, going out and about is much less convenient, and there are absolutely no shops. The only restaurant is in the house next door, owned by Mario Sanchez. I'm not sure how regularly Mario keeps his place open, but he is a fantastic cook. You basically eat what he's preparing, but it doesn't matter what it is, it'll be mouth watering. I had the pleasure of eating there twice, and it was amazing.

Car Rental

In order to reach Chiabal and meet up with Esteban for our day trip into the Cuchumatanes mountains, I rented a Suzuki Swift from Hertz in Quetzaltenango (www.hertzguatemala.com). The Hertz office is located in the Latam Hotel Plaza Pradera on Avenida Las Americas near the Minerva bus station. In order to keep my rental to 48 hours, I picked up the car just before noon and headed north to Chiabal. Traffic was horrendous, and it took me 6.5 hours to go the approximately 125 km to Chiabal. On our day trip the next day, the roads were very potholed, especially the dirt road in the direction of Puerta del Cielo. The Suzuki Swift had a decent clearance so there was no huge problem, although travel was slow. On the whole, the car performed well. I left Chiabal very early and returned the car within the 48-hour period, and the two-day rental came to about USD 88, including the collision damage waiver. The Hertz representative was very helpful and friendly, and there was no up-sell pressure to add extra insurance.

Birding Sites

Finca El Pilar

The entrance to this private reserve is at gps: 14.543387, -90.719034, about a 30-minute (2 km) walk from central Antigua. The reserve is open from 07⁰⁰ until 16⁰⁰, and there is an entrance fee of GTQ 45 if I remember correctly. On my first morning visit, I arrived early and was let in at 06³⁰, but a locked gate must be opened to allow entrance.

There are no maps, other than what the guard at the entrance has on his cell phone; however, it is easy to find your way around. After passing the gate, continue straight ahead, passing some pools on the left. As the road swings up to the right, there is a small sign saying "Sendero" directing you to the left between two buildings. Following this route, and after reaching a parking area, the trail begins. After a short distance, the famed hummingbird feeders are reached. They were quite active, although the viewing was hampered by a constructed roof over the feeders. The best bird at the feeders was Rufous Sabrewing, and this location proved to be the only place I saw this species on my trip.

The trail continues beyond the feeders, and climbs up to eventually re-reach the main road through the reserve. At this point, it's possible to continue up further along the road, and after about 4-5 km from the entrance, you come to a complex of cabins at a large clearing. Just at the far end of this clearing, a trail to the right branches off, and I believe it loops down and re-connects with the main road further below, although I didn't walk very far along it, even though it looked good from a birding perspective. Apparently, the main road continues on beyond the clearing for several more kilometres, although I never ventured beyond the clearing, instead just following the main road back to the entrance.

Birding in the reserve was a bit slow. Aside from the Rufous Sabrewing, El Pilar is known as a good place for Bar-winged Oriole, and I did manage to find one along the main road through the reserve. I spent two mornings to mid-afternoons at the reserve, although I could have gotten away with one day as I found my two key targets on the first day.

Fuentes Georginas

The habitat surrounding the hot springs and pools at Fuentes Georginas is wonderful for birding. Pink-headed Warbler is common on the ridge trail which has also become a reliable place for Horned Guan. I decided to spend three nights here, and it was time well spent.

To access the ridge trail, walk all the way through the baths, crossing over a little bridge, to the very last small picnic site. As you stand facing it, you will see a trail curving up and to your left (do not go behind the picnic site and take the trail there). Taking this trail, you'll quickly come to a big sign, and the trail continues upwards. It is steep, and a little slippery, and it takes about 30-40 minutes of climbing to reach the ridge. On my second morning, and just below the ridge, a large bird was flushed in the canopy. While it was initially hidden, I soon heard the characteristic alarm call of Horned Guan, and it then flew across the trail and into another tree, giving me a great look. After admiring this bird for some time, it took a few moments to reach the ridge, and upon turning left, I soon came across two more Horned Guans. Magical! My understanding is that Horned Guans can be seen anywhere along the ridge trail, and there have even been sightings in the parking lot at the hot springs.

Upon reaching the ridge, you can turn either left or right. To the right, there is an old sign pointing to Mirador Puimama. I initially ignored this trail, but after seeing my key target birds, I was curious to see where it went. Contrary to what others have said, this trail does continue maybe 20 minutes to the mirador, although you have to crawl under a downed trunk or two. The trail is not well utilized and is rather overgrown. After walking along it for awhile, I started to wonder about chiggers in the long grasses, and sure enough, I did suffer from some annoying bites. There was little bird activity along this trail, and given the probability of chiggers, it could easily be ignored.

Once reaching the ridge, there is also a sign pointing you to Volcan Pecula to the left, and this seems to be the main trail. On my first morning, I walked along this trail until late morning before starting my return. There are steep portions (although not as steep as the trail reaching the ridge from below), but there are also flat areas as well. Eventually, the trail reaches a junction with what looks like an old jeep trail. At this junction, I turned right and continued upwards for maybe 30 minutes before retracing my steps. On my second morning, after seeing the guans, I didn't walk as far up the ridge trail. The whole trail is good for birds, and Pink-headed Warbler was common, more so the higher up you got. The trail is easy to follow. Any splits in the trail seem to meet up again a short distance later. The only uncertainty was a trail heading down to the left not long after turning left at the top of the ridge. There was a big sign in red with an arrow pointing down. Perhaps this is an alternate way down to the parking area, but I ignored it. An early start on the trail is advisable, as during my visit in October, thick fog rolled in around 10³⁰-11⁰⁰, making birding very difficult. Other notable sightings on the ridge trail included Mexican Violetear, Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem, Black-

throated Jay, Rufous-browed Wren and Grey Silky-flycatcher.

The entrance road is a reliable place for Wine-throated Hummingbird, although as others have struggled to find it here, there may be some seasonality to its movements. Fortunately, Wine-throated Hummingbird was very common during my stay in October. Walking out past the entrance gate, within a few hundred metres, you will come to a sharp curve to the right. As the road straightens out, there is a metal guard rail on the left and the distance marker 221-600 painted on the road at around gps: 14.755946, -91.483394. From here, Wine-throated Hummingbird was rather common up to just beyond the point where the road makes a sharp curve to the left, only a few hundred metres away. The birds perched on the low, roadside bushes on the left, and sometimes would fly up (possibly displaying?) to the bushes higher up on the other side of the road. During October, fog was a problem here as it rolled in by late morning. Afternoon visits were challenging in that the thick fog sometimes obscured everything. I never walked much beyond gps: 14.758292, -91.482546 as the habitat quickly became degraded. Unicoloured Jay was seen along the entrance road, as well as Mexican Violetear, Rufous-browed Wren, Black-throated Jay and Rufous-collared Robin.

Fulvous Owl was vocal, mainly before dawn, and I managed to see one obliging bird on my second morning right at cabin #9 where I spent the night. Others have had Mexican Whip-poor-will, but I didn't even hear it during my stay.

Cuchumatanes Mountains

Anyone heading into the Cuchumatanes region to search for its avian riches is advised to contact local guide Esteban Matias (esteban.matias@hotmail.com or Whatsapp: +502 5381 0540). Esteban lives in Chiabal, and has accommodations in a one-room guesthouse adjacent to his house. Esteban is a great guy and very knowledgeable about the birds in the mountains. He'll work extremely hard to get the birds on your list. His guiding fee is USD 85 for one day plus meals if you eat out. I was originally going to schedule two days with him, but as I was travelling alone and without my own transportation, I was relying on Esteban hiring a vehicle, and the best he could do out of the local area was something for USD 150 per day which was out of my price range. I then planned for just one day, but about two weeks before leaving for Guatemala, Esteban contacted me to say that the car he had arranged was undergoing repairs and would not be available, and that there were no other vehicles possible to use. This prompted me to rent a car instead. In retrospect, I should have spent two full days with Esteban as some birds are challenging (especially the quails), and I left without seeing a few of my key birds.

I arrived in Chiabal at dusk, and after setting up in the guesthouse, Esteban

and I walked the trail up from the guesthouse to find Mexican Whip-poor-will which we did without too much effort. Great look too.

The next morning at dawn, we again walked up the trail from the guesthouse for about 2 hours, seeing quite a few on my list: Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Pine Flycatcher, and Black-capped Siskin which was one of my key targets. We then drove to a forested area just beyond the town of Todos Santos Cuchumatán, and then spent about 1.5 hours in this area, finding Northern Pygmy-Owl and Blue-throated Motmot.

We then re-traced our steps back to Chiabal and the junction with the main road where we headed north (full of massive potholes) and then on another road west (full of even bigger potholes) towards the entrance of the Todos Santos Cuchumatán Regional Park. On the way, we made a couple of stops for Goldman's Warbler (not yet officially split from Yellow-rumped Warbler, but surely distinct), seeing one each at two different spots, along with a few more Black-capped Siskins. A stop at a large grassland site produced heard-only Ocellated Quail which would not show themselves. Just before reaching the entrance to the park, there was a house with a large bank of flowers which is Esteban's location for Garnet-throated Hummingbird, and we saw three males there. Apparently they are seasonal at this location, present from about May to November.

We only proceeded a short distance into the park to the Puerta del Cielo area where we parked the car and walked. We did find one Pink-headed Warbler, but otherwise, luck was not with me as we had "heard only" Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge, Ocellated Quail and Blue-and-white Mockingbird. After dark, a nearby site produced two fantastic Unspotted Saw-whet Owls, and luckily we had great looks at them. No sign of Flammulated Owl.

Anyone wishing to bird this area is advised to contact Esteban, as finding your way around independently would be very challenging. As such, my descriptions of the locations I visited are somewhat lacking in detail.

Rostro Maya trail (Sendero Nariz del Indio)

The entrance to the trail is in the village of San Juan La Laguna at gps: 14.698988, -91.289685. There is a small ticket booth where you pay the Q 30 entrance fee. The trail climbs, via several miradors, up to Santa Clara La Laguna, but this must take many hours. The trail is known for Belted Flycatcher in the upper regions, and both Slender Sheartail and White-faced Ground-Sparrow lower down. The trail is easy to follow, and is constructed partly of concrete steps in the lower regions. It's only about 500-600 metres to the first mirador (Cerro de la Cruz), and I had two pairs of White-faced Ground Sparrows along here, as well as

a female Slender Sheartail, quite active in a bank of flowers. There is a little side trail to the first mirador, and it was here that a Lesser Roadrunner jumped on to the trail, presenting me with a prolonged look. The mirador provides a very nice look out over the lake, and many vendors were setting up their booths, having carted their merchandise all the way up from below. Very hard work.

I only walked a short distance up through a plantation above the first mirador, and then retraced my steps, seeing my first Rusty Sparrow on the way down. I had heard concerns about safety on this trail, but it is heavily travelled by local people and tourists, so it seemed perfectly safe. Accessing the trail was easy. I stayed in San Pedro La Laguna, and took a tuktuk for Q 10. I was at the ticket booth at 06¹⁵, and I stayed for about three hours. I had no detailed information on Belted Flycatcher at this site, so I decided to hope for good fortune at another location.

Mirador Rey Tepepul

I planned for two days at this site. Access was quite straightforward - a tuktuk from Santiago Atitlan could be bargained for Q 40-50. There is a small traffic control hut at the mirador and a couple of viewing sites, and the trail begins just a short distance back along the road towards Santiago Atitlan at gps: 14.598, -91.23025. The trail descends through light forest and plantations and soon reached an obvious lookout with a semi-circular fence. The trail continued down, but eventually seemed to peter out to nothing at a small river. Upon retracing my steps, I found what should have been an obvious side trail to the left (left from the original position of coming down the trail). Since this trail is supposed to loop back up to the main road just below where it started, I assume that this side trail to the left is what I should have taken to complete the loop, which is supposed to be something like 2 km in distance. As the birding had been supremely quiet on the trail, aside from an interesting flock of about 40 Grey Silky-flycatchers, I decided instead to head back up to the main road.

Heading down the main road in the direction of town, it appeared the other end of the loop trail was at gps: 14.597188, -91.228308, although I did not confirm this as I only walked a short distance along this part of the trail. Walking along the road did produce a male Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, one of my key targets here. A bit further down the main road at gps: 14.600047, -91.224457, there is an obvious trail cut into the forest. This appeared to be a woodcutter's trail, as there was a fair bit of wood cutting going on. I walked in for a short distance, but the trail split and became quite a maze with many side paths heading off in different directions. I didn't venture too far in, but I did hear and call in a very nice Yellow-

throated Nightingale-Thrush, my only one for the trip. No sign during the morning of my main target, Azure-rumped Tanager, which I had expected to be easy here.

For my second day in the area, I had been advised by John Cahill, owner of Xikanel Birding Adventures, to stake out a ridge at gps: 14.591081, -91.248403 for the best chance of seeing Azure-rumped Tanager. The ridge is accessed by a woodcutter's trail and is a short distance from the main road. I found what I hoped was a good vantage point for both sides of the ridge, but over the course of about four hours, I had no luck at all with Azure-rumped Tanager, although I did have a quick look at a pair of Blue-crowned Chlorophonia. Walking back up the main road to the mirador produced another male Emerald-chinned Hummingbird, and I continued down the road in the direction of town, stopping in on the previously mentioned trails for short looks. Flagging down transportation back to Santiago Atitlan was easy as pickups run along the road which stop for passengers. A ride in the box back to town is about Q 5. I had been warned to be careful while birding this area as well, as there have been reports of robberies, and indeed there were few other people around besides woodcutters. For this reason, I didn't venture too far in off the road on the woodcutter's trails. Nevertheless, everyone I did meet seemed very friendly.

Hotel Tolimán

The restaurant at the Hotel Tolimán has a few hummingbird feeders, and there have been reports of Blue-tailed Hummingbird. I visited for lunch on Nov. 2 and ran into Josue de lux Leon, a guide I had been communicating with regarding a location for Belted Flycatcher. He was guiding a couple, and after exchanging pleasantries, we had a look at the hummingbirds. Berylline Hummingbird was quite common, and as it is quite similar to Blue-tailed Hummingbird, care must be taken to ensure a proper identification. There have also been reports of potential hybrids of Blue-tailed and Berylline at this location with an intermediate tail colour. Unfortunately, the feeders are set up at the edge of the railing at the restaurant, and the roof blocks most of the direct sunlight so the birds invariably appear dark, not good if you are trying to distinguish tail colour. The hummingbirds seemed uninterested in any of the flowers in the garden. At one point, Josue picked out a Blue-tailed, but as the bird was basically silhouetted against the poor light, I was unsure if I was going to accept the sighting and count the bird. I returned for lunch again the next day for another try, but couldn't count Blue-tailed Hummingbird.

IMAP (Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura)

This has become the go-to site for Slender Sheartail. From San Lucas Tolimán, head about 3.3 km along the road to Santiago Atitlan, and turn right at gps: 14.651290, -91.157624. Follow the road a short distance as it swings left to a parking area. Go past the parking area and find the main office. Explain that you are there to see the "special hummingbird" (although they will already know why you are there as they are well set up for birders), and someone will direct you back out to a little booth where you pay a visitor's fee of Q 35. Ask someone to show you where to go, and you will be walked a short distance to an obvious spot with a wooden lectern, set up so that you can place your birding guidebook I suppose. A nearby bare twig is a favoured perching spot, and it took only a few moments for a spectacular male Slender Sheartail to show up. Another favoured spot is just maybe 20 metres off to the left.

You are free to wander around to look for other birds. A few coots and gallinules were in the lake, and a few more scrubland birds were located. After I was there for about 15 minutes, Josue showed up with the couple he was guiding, and after we all had a great look around, they offered to give me a ride back to San Lucas Tolimán. To get there from San Lucas Tolimán, I hired a tuktuk for something like Q 20 if I remember correctly, although the pickup trucks that ply the road between San Lucas Tolimán and Santiago Atitlan could drop you at the intersection with the main road for about Q 5.

Tanager spot

Prior to leaving for Guatemala, I had been in contact with Josue De Leon Lux (email: josuedeleonlux@gmail.com; Whatsapp: +502 3068 8988) about a day trip to find Belted Flycatcher. After bumping into him at the Hotel Tolimán, we got to talking about birds and he told me of a nearby location for Azure-rumped Tanager which I had missed at Mirador Rey Tepepul. He was unable to guide me, but his brother Lester (Whatsapp +502 5925 4919) was free. Lester and I set up a time for him to meet me at my hotel in San Lucas Tolimán, and we walked over to the minibus stop at the corner of 3a Avenida and 4a Calle to catch a minibus in the direction of Godínez. About 15 minutes or so later, we got off in the middle of nowhere at a roadside farm and took a little path into the degraded forest. A short walk took us to a gigantic fig tree, and this was the spot to wait. We located a good vantage point, and it didn't take too long for a pair of Azure-rumped Tanagers to arrive. As the birds were quite far away, a scope was necessary to get a good look. We also managed to see a male Blue-crowned Chlorophonia and my only Western Tanagers of the trip. A distant Hooded Grosbeak was heard as well.

After spending a little more than two hours at the site, we caught a minibus back to San Lucas Tolimán. The charge for the morning was USD 50. Lester is an excellent guide, speaks very good English, and really knows his birds.

Los Tarrales

I arranged in advance to spend two nights at Los Tarrales, and booking via their website (www.tarralesreserve.com) was straightforward. I stayed in a beautiful room in Las Chachas, a stand-alone building of five rooms in total. A night was USD 47, and meals, served buffet-style, were USD 15 apiece. I ate lunch and dinner during my stay, and the food was excellent. Free wifi was possible at their comfortable open-air business centre. A map of the trails is available at reception, and you are permitted to walk them alone, although they do have an in-house bird guide as well. I thoroughly enjoyed my two days here.

The fruit feeders at Los Tarrales are a hub of activity, drawing in a wide assortment of birds, and I picked up new species like White-bellied Chachalaca, Altamira Oriole and White-throated Magpie-Jay without much effort. I spent most of my time walking the Rinconada trail, a 2-km loop trail accessed by walking out past the main lodge complex, and just after passing the tree house accommodations, the trail begins, with a few signs pointing the way. The trail climbs up to a mirador (apparently good for Highland Guan, but I missed it), before descending in a counterclockwise manner to reach the bottom to eventually complete the loop. After arriving at Los Tarrales early on my first morning, I then walked the trail, with my best find being a Green Shrike-Vireo not long after beginning the descent from the mirador. Luckily, it was not much above eye-level, and was well-visible as it moved through the tangles. In the afternoon, the rains came and washed out the birding for the day.

On my full day at Los Tarrales, I walked the Rinconada trail in both the morning and afternoon, with my best sightings in the morning being a Middle American Leaf-tosser at the bench on the right-hand side just up from the junction with the shortcut trail which joins the other side of the loop, Spot-breasted Wren in the forest and a Guatemalan Tyrannulet at the bottom of the trail near where it connects with the road going up to the volcano. Later in the morning, I walked the short Lagoon trail, accessed by walking the path beyond the restaurant. I had hoped to find Rufous-breasted Spinetail here, but I struck out. Meanwhile, Josue arrived at Los Tarrales to meet up with the couple he had been guiding, and after lunch, we all walked the entrance road together. We found four nice male Painted Buntings, and Josue called in a Grey-crowned Yellowthroat. Josue and the couple left for some afternoon photography, and I walked the Rinconada trail, battling

more rain, seeing another Spot-breasted Wren, but otherwise it was rather quiet. Josue had tipped me off to look for Lesser Spine-tailed Swift from the lodge area high up in the sky around dusk, and sure enough I saw two birds at great height. Although I could not see the characteristic white markings, the size, shape and flight pattern was enough to clinch the identification.

Perhaps at this point, I should comment on one of the main birds I came to Los Tarrales to see - Blue-tailed Hummingbird. Josue advised me to check out the *Verbena* flowers which are everywhere at Los Tarrales, including right in front of Las Chachas. I staked out these flowers and the long bank of *Verbena* flowers on the walk towards the Rinconada trail without seeing any Blue-tailed Hummingbirds. Part of the problem may have been the numerous and aggressive Cinnamon Hummingbirds which chased all the other hummers away. I was also advised that the forest along the Rinconada trail was good for Blue-tailed, but all I found there was White-bellied Emerald which was common. Fortunately, Josue tipped me off about seeing a Blue-tailed Hummingbird at the Hotel Bambú in Santiago Atitlan with his clients a few days previously, so I decided to stop in there on my way to Panajachel.

On my last morning at Los Tarrales, I again walked the Rinconada trail, and this time was rewarded with seeing two different Tody Motmots, one as I was ascending the trail towards the mirador, and another on the way down. After checking out, I walked out to the main road and easily caught a minibus heading to San Lucas Tolimán.

Hotel Bambú in Santiago Atitlan

After my total lack of success in finding Blue-tailed Hummingbird at Los Tarrales, I decided to try my luck at the Hotel Bambú in Santiago Atitlan after being tipped off by Josue. Leaving Los Tarrales, I easily caught a minibus to San Lucas Tolimán, and at the exact spot the minibus finished its route, there was a pickup truck filling up with passengers for the run to Santiago Atitlan, so I climbed aboard. The fare was something like Q 5, and I was dropped off at the little entrance road to the hotel. I arranged for lunch at the outside patio, and while I was waiting, scanned the garden from the patio's railing. It didn't take very long for a beautiful Blue-tailed Hummingbird to fly in and feed from a tall stalk of red flowers that was right at the edge of the patio. It's tail was the most amazing shade of blue, highlighted by the ample sunlight. It flew off and returned several times, and after I enjoyed my excellent lunch, satisfied at finally tracking down this beautiful bird, I walked into town and down to the dock where I caught a launch to Panajachel.

Aldea Los Robles

While at Los Tarrales, I had made arrangements via Whatsapp for Lester to guide me at Aldea Los Robles to find Belted Flycatcher. Lester lives in nearby Godínez, so the plan was for me to take a minibus from Panajachel to Godínez, and then a tuktuk out to the path into the birding site next to a school to meet him there. The location is at gps: 14.704216, -91.090136. The birding site is essentially on community lands, where people can grow small-scale crops, although there is plenty of scrubby bush around. Apparently, Belted Flycatcher is best located at one particular spot that is off the main trail. The plan was to stake out the spot and just wait, which we did for quite some time before Lester noticed some movement, and we got a pretty good but obstructed look at this skulker. As this bird is difficult and there was no guarantee, it was a relief to find it. It didn't vocalize at all, and did not respond in any way to the tape Lester was using. I think it would be very difficult to find this bird here unaided by someone who knows the area. I had a few other targets possible, and we walked around seeing a small flock of Black-capped Swallows, and two Blue-and-white Mockingbirds, the first essentially a flash as it flew across the trail, and the other a very distant calling bird up in a tree. It soon got very hot, and after spending a little under four hours at the site, we left and I retraced my steps to Panajachel. The charge was USD 50 for the morning.

Hotel Atitlan in Panajachel

The garden here is known as a location for Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird. I was considering coming here during the afternoon of my return to Panajachel from Los Robles, but the weather was unsettled and it began to rain, so I decided to put off my search to the next morning. My plan was to walk over to the hotel, have breakfast, and search for the hummingbird. Hotel Atitlan is on the outskirts of town, but it was a fairly short walk, and as I entered the grounds, I was motioned to come over to the guard's hut. There is a GTQ 75 entrance fee to the hotel, which you can put towards food or drink if you wish. I paid my fee and got my ticket which was validated at reception inside the hotel, and I was directed to the breakfast area. Choosing to sit outside in hopes of finding the bird, it was clear that I would likely have to wait since there was only one small flowering bush in sight, and the only bird attending it was a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

The breakfast was a la carte, and mine was very good with a price of exactly GTQ 75! Passing beyond the breakfast area, I noticed the gardens to be quite large, and not knowing where to go, I decided to look for an area with lots of appropriate flowers which I found down towards the water and to the right side of

the garden. There were several Azure-crowned Hummingbirds acting rather aggressively, but I did find a spectacular male Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird feeding on some small red flowers close to the ground. Fortunately, he was not chased off and I had a brilliant look at him. I hung around, hoping he would return, but he did not, and as I was under some time constraints with plans to meet up with some friends, I walked back to town and took a launch over to San Marcos La Laguna.

Chajbaoc Reserve

This reserve, part farm, part wildlife preserve, is owned by Max Noack who lives onsite. Arrangements can be made in Spanish with Max via Whatsapp: +502 5704 4525 or email: maxnoack@gmail.com. There is a Q 40 entrance fee. John Cahill, who lives near Cobán, generously offered to visit Chajbaoc with me, and he picked me up at my hotel at 05⁰⁰ and we drove the short distance to the reserve, saving me a 30-minute walk. The entrance road is at gps: 15.484806, -90.364538, and it's a short distance, staying right, to a parking area and Max's house.

After being greeted by Max and his manager/guide (whose name unfortunately escapes me), John, I and the guide began walking the trails. It seems like there are about 2-3 km of trails. John has an incredible ear, and was picking out calls left and right. We flushed a few Common Pauraque before getting a great look at one on the ground, and then just as it was beginning to get light, we had a brief look at an adult Scaled Antpitta before it jumped off the trail, and soon thereafter, a longer look at a juvenile.

We were invited back to Max's house for some fresh and delicious tamales for breakfast, and then the guide and I returned to the trails while John left as he had some birders arriving to search for Greater Swallow-tailed Swift and Bearded Screech-Owl near his home. While preparing for my trip, I didn't come across any information about where to see these two species in Guatemala, but the plans for the rest of my trip were set and I didn't have the flexibility to make arrangements with John at that time. Bit of a regret!

The birding during the rest of the morning was a bit slow. Slate-coloured Solitaire wouldn't come into view, but we did find some nice migratory warblers, especially Blue-winged Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler. Red-throated Ant-Tanager was seen which apparently is a good bird for Chajbaoc. I stayed until just before noon, and Max generously offered to drive me back to town, saving me the walk.

Laguna Chichoj

This small water body is a reliable site for Ruddy Crake and White-throated Flycatcher. I paid a taxi to take me out to the bus station on the outskirts of Cobán in order to catch a minibus to San Cristobal Verapaz which was totally unnecessary as the minibus returned to the downtown and passed along 1a Calle. There are a few paradas (bus stops) along 1a Calle and I could have saved the taxi fare and just caught it here as the minibuses leave on a very regular basis.

After being dropped off at the end of the route in the middle of San Cristobal Verapaz, I walked about 30 minutes to a little park called El Petencito. Once reaching a little junction at roughly gps: 15.365642, -90.470093, a short dirt road to the right begins and circumnavigates the small park. I only birded maybe 200 metres from here to gps: 15.364292, -90.469650. Ruddy Crake was pretty common in the first bit of the marsh by voice. I accidentally flushed one, and patiently called another one in for a pretty good look as well. Nearer the lake, the taller reeds proved to be good for White-throated Flycatcher, and I called in one responsive bird rather easily.

After having being fortunate to have good luck with my two targets, I walked back to catch the return minibus, but stopping in Santa Cruz Verapaz at the junction with the main highway to Guatemala City. My next stop was Ranchitos del Quetzal, and there was a bus waiting at the junction heading to Guatemala City, so I jumped on. The driver was the only one I came across in Guatemala who was reckless and unsafe, putting a lot of strain on the mechanics of the bus. Sure enough we eventually broke down. A relief bus was called in for the passengers heading to Guatemala City, and the rest of us got back on the original bus which had been patched up, and we limped along the highway before I could finally disembark at my destination.

Ranchitos del Quetzal

The entrance to Ranchitos del Quetzal is at gps: 15.2154, -90.2191, about 100 metres up the highway from the Biotopo del Quetzal. There is one 2-km loop trail at Ranchitos, beginning just past the accommodations, and circling around to return close to the reception/restaurant. Rudy Boztoc is the manager/guide and he can be reached by email: rudybc@gmail.com or Whatsapp: +502 3695 3862. I believe Rudy only speaks Spanish. I did not use his services at Ranchitos, preferring to bird alone, although Rudy was enthusiastic in providing advice.

I had four nights using Ranchitos as a base, and I walked the loop trail often in search of my targets which were, as new species: Slate-coloured Solitaire, Shining Honeycreeper, Azure-hooded Jay, Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush,

White-faced Quail-Dove, Highland Guan, Black Thrush, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner and Hooded Grosbeak. I was also hoping for better looks at Unicoloured Jay and Middle American Leaf-tosser. Slate-coloured Solitaire was relatively common by voice, although usually frustratingly distant. It wasn't until day 3 that I managed to track one down and get a look at it in the canopy. I saw Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush two times along the loop trail, and the Quail-Dove once. Rudy saw Shining Honeycreeper around the reception area while I was nearby, but by the time he called me over, it had disappeared. I heard Azure-hooded Jay, but, unbelievably, never did see it. I thought it was supposed to be essentially unmissable here. Also no sign of Highland Guan, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner or Hooded Grosbeak. I did get a great look at Middle American Leaf-tosser, assisted by playback, a few hundred metres after the start of the loop trail, and Unicoloured Jay was very common. Black Thrush was seen over at the Biotopo del Quetzal.

The weather during my stay was rather lousy with regular rain, sometimes heavy. The noise from the highway was terrible with a heavy use of air brakes by the big trucks. And the birding was very slow. It took a lot of effort to see the targets I did see.

Biotopo del Quetzal

For something different, I wanted to give the trails here a try, but it doesn't open until 8 am, and closes around 4 pm if I remember correctly. I came over one morning at 8 am, paid my GTQ 60 entrance, and after a little introductory talk by a park facilitator, I headed to the start of the trails. There is a short loop trail of about 2 km and a long loop trail of about 4.5 km, and they both start and end at the same place as the short trail branches off to join up with the long trail again before returning to the entrance.

I chose to complete the long trail. Unicoloured Jay was rather common and seen right away, and I was fortunate to find a female Black Thrush right on the trail not far from the start, but aside from that, it was a rather birdless hike around and back down to the entrance. There was a fruiting tree near the entrance attracting Unicoloured Jay, Northern Emerald Toucanet and Chestnut-headed Oropendola, but unfortunately not the Azure-hooded Jays I was looking for. I stayed until about 1 pm before returning to Ranchitos.

Finca Santa Rosa road

This road starts about 10 km from Ranchitos del Quetzal at gps: 15.2532, -90.2830. One morning, I flagged down a chicken bus at Ranchitos and was dropped at the beginning of the road. Ebird lists three hotspots along this road, and I

thought it was worthy of a morning's exploration, as it offered better chances at Golden-cheeked Warbler and the endemic subspecies of Plumbeous Vireo. As I had no personal transportation, I was on foot. The first bit of the road is built up with little good habitat, but as it climbs to a peak, it becomes more and more forested before the road steeply declines. I birded through to the Belted Flycatcher site at gps: 15.2443974, -90.2813556 (~ 1.8 km from the junction), to the pine forest site at gps: 15.2405834, -90.2842876 (~ 2.6 km from the junction) and a short distance beyond, but did not quite reach the Slender Sheartail site which is at gps: 15.224702, -90.282726 (~ 5.1 km from the junction). As the birding had been exceedingly slow and there was a significant threat of rain, I retraced my steps to the main road and flagged down a minibus back to Ranchitos. It was a disappointing morning with no new species and my only new trip bird was Yellow-backed Oriole. I used occasional playback, but maybe a more concerted effort would have teased something good out of the scrub. I did get a look at a vireo, but not long enough to be sure whether it was Blue-headed or Plumbeous as the two subspecies here look very similar. Rudy said that Plumbeous was more common further down the road, but I had no means to get there.

Heloderma Reserve

For something off the beaten track, and a chance to explore a different habitat, I made arrangements to stay at the Heloderma Reserve. The reserve was developed in support of the protection of the Guatemalan Bearded Lizard which is endemic to the Motagua Valley. There is a small station in the reserve with two rooms for guests, and I stayed for two nights.

Arriving there was a little complicated. I was directed to find my way to the village of El Arenal where there was a park ranger office. One of the rangers would then take me by motorbike to the reserve. After checking out at Ranchitos del Quetzal, I caught a bus in the direction of Guatemala City, but I disembarked at the major road junction called "El Rancho" where the CA 14 and CA 9 meet. I walked to the far end of El Rancho and asked around for a bus heading to Cabañas, my presumed next port of call. The problem was that there are only two bridges over the Motagua River, one at El Jícaro and one at Santa Cruz. El Jícaro would have been preferable since it offered a shorter route to Cabañas, but it seemed there was no transportation to El Jícaro, so it was suggested that I should first take a bus to Santa Cruz where I could find a minibus to Cabañas. Fortunately, a bus showed up quickly and off I went to Santa Cruz. As I passed the turnoff to El Jícaro, I saw tuktuks waiting at the junction, meaning that I could have taken one into town and on to Cabañas, shortening my route. However, I wasn't in a hurry and

I enjoyed my quite comfortable bus ride to Santa Cruz, getting off at the one and only major intersection in this small town. A few people at the junction were themselves waiting for the minibus to Cabañas, so I waited with them, picking up a few snacks from a nearby shop. After a short wait, the minibus to Cabañas came by and off I went. Once in Cabañas, I hired a tuktuk (GTQ 40) to take me to the end of the road at El Arenal. Once we arrived, the road seemed to just end and El Arenal itself just seemed to be a collection of scattered houses without any sense of organization. Asking around, I found someone who knew where the park ranger office was, and he directed me and the tuktuk over to a small house with a sign saying "Informacion - Reserva Heloderma". I spoke to a lady there and tried to explain in my mediocre Spanish that I had a reservation at the reserve, and I guess I finally made myself understood as she called one of the park guards, and after a 20-minute or so wait, he came by and we went by motorbike the 4-5 km to the reserve headquarters which is at approximately gps: 14.862091, -89.786008.

Gilberto Salazar, the park ranger, gave me a bit of a tour of the facility, and explained the trails, although there is a map as well posted near the building. Heading up from the reserve building on the main trail, you reach a junction. Going left is the "short" trail which loops back to end at the other side of the reserve building, but continuing straight leads to the "long" trail which takes a longer loop, and merges with the short trail before returning the same way. And there was the road into the reserve that we had taken by motorbike as well.

My main targets here were Middle American Screech Owl, Crested Bobwhite, Lesser Ground-Cuckoo, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Banded Wren, Rufous-crowned Motmot, White-fronted Parrot and Elegant Trogon. On my first afternoon, I birded the area around the reserve building and the short trail alone. I did try going up the long trail as well, but it was very hot, with little shade, and the trail was somewhat steep, and after birding continuously for one month, I was getting a bit tired, both physically and mentally, so I passed on completing the loop. On my full day, Gilberto arrived in the morning, and based on what I was looking for, we birded the main dirt road back in the direction of El Arenal, finding Russet-crowned Motmot and White-lored Gnatcatcher. After a break for lunch, we birded around the reserve building and a side trail, finding a pair of Elegant Trogons, before trying the short trail which was pretty quiet. We called in quits in the late afternoon, and while I was relaxing alone around the reserve building, two Lesser Ground-Cuckoos vocalized very near, but they rapidly passed through camp and disappeared. I didn't see them and this was my only encounter. Gilberto said Banded Wren was best found up on the long trail which I didn't get to, and there was no sign of Crested Bobwhite.

Gilberto offered to take me back to the main highway at El Jícaro by motorbike the next morning, significantly simplifying my journey to Guatemala City, and we agreed on a pickup at 09⁰⁰. This gave me a little time in the morning for a last look, and I found a perched pair of White-fronted Parrots just a bit down from the reserve building. I did search for night birds after dark and before dawn during my stay. Middle American Screech-Owl was heard regularly around the reserve building, but refused to show. Likewise, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl remained heard only, but I did find about four Lesser Nighthawks at dusk, just at the bottom of the little road to the reserve building where it meets the dirt road back to El Arenal.

Bird List

Species names are based upon the taxonomy used by the ebird/Clements checklist.

ANATIDAE (Ducks, Geese and Waterfowl)

Blue-winged Teal

Spatula discors

A single bird was flushed from a small pool on the way to the hummingbird feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. A flock of about 12 birds was on Lake Atitlan at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Lesser Scaup

Aythya affinis

A flock of 13 birds was on Laguna Chichoj on Nov. 11.

CRACIDAE (Guans, Chachalacas and Currasows)

Plain Chachalaca

Ortalis vetula

Heard only. Heard at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

White-bellied Chachalaca

Ortalis leucogastra

Common on the grounds at Los Tarrales lodge from Nov. 4-6, and occasionally seen along the trails as well. Great looks at the fruit feeders.

Crested Guan

Penelope purpurascens

A brief look at two birds as they flushed as I walked the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales Lodge on Nov. 5. As I walked the trail the next day, one flew from behind me and over my head to land in the open in a nearby tree, giving me a great, prolonged look.

Horned Guan***Oreophasis derbianus***

Just below the ridge at Fuentes Georginas on the morning of Oct. 24, I was startled by the movement in the canopy of a large bird. Initially hidden, it gave the characteristic alarm call of Horned Guan, and then flushed to a nearby tree where I had a prolonged and fantastic look at this amazing bird. Absolutely incredible. Finally leaving him in peace, I reached the ridge and turned left to follow the trail further up and quickly found two more Horned Guans. One immediately flew off, while the other stayed put, giving the alarm call. Hours later, when I was making my return, the first guan was still hanging around just below the ridge, and I had a good look at him again.

ODONTOPHORIDAE (New World Quail)**Buffy-crowned Wood-Partridge*****Dendrortyx leucophrys***

Heard only. Heard at Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28, but the birds refused to show.

Spotted Wood-Quail***Odontophorus guttatus***

Heard only. Heard on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

Singing Quail***Dactylortyx thoracicus***

Heard only. Heard along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23 and 24, as well as from the entrance road on the morning of Oct. 25. Also heard at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31.

Ocellated Quail***Cyrtonyx ocellatus***

Heard only. A frustrating miss. Birds were heard on Oct. 28 in a grassland area on the way to Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán Regional Park, and also around Puerta del Cielo later in the day.

COLUMBIDAE (Pigeons and Doves)**Rock Pigeon*****Columba livia***

Introduced. First seen in Antigua, and present in other urban environments.

Band-tailed Pigeon***Patagioenas fasciata***

A flock of eight birds was seen in flight from the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 25. A flock of six birds was seen in flight along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Common at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. A flock of about 20 birds was seen at the Biotopo del Quetzal on Nov. 13, and another flock of about 15 birds was spotted along the Finca Santa Rosa road the next day on the 14th.

Red-billed Pigeon***Patagioenas flavirostris***

One was seen well along the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 25.

White-winged Dove***Zenaida asiatica***

Two birds were found at the Hotel Tolimán on Nov. 3. Two more were seen at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. Three were observed at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 15.

Inca Dove***Columbina inca***

Common at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20 and 21. Common on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. One was at the Azure-rumped Tanager spot on Nov. 3. Our walk at Los Robles on Nov. 7 produced one bird. Very common at the Heloderma Reserve.

White-tipped Dove***Leptotila verreauxi***

Common by voice at Finca El Pilar, and one was seen on Oct. 20. Heard along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. One was spotted at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31, and another at IMAP on Nov. 2. Two were found on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6. Our walk at Los Robles on Nov. 7 produced one bird. Two more were observed at Chajbaoc on Nov. 10. One was found on the trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 14. Very common at the Heloderma Reserve.

White-faced Quail-Dove***Zentrygon albifacies***

One bird casually popped onto the trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 14 right in front of me, and walked across to the other side and disappeared.

CUCULIDAE (Cuckoos)**Squirrel Cuckoo*****Piaya cayana***

One was found near the beginning of the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4, and another on the Lagoon trail the next day on the 5th. Two were seen at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Groove-billed Ani***Crotophaga sulcirostris***

Two birds were in the scrub at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Lesser Roadrunner***Geococcyx velox***

A fantastic look at one tame bird at the first mirador on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30.

Lesser Ground-Cuckoo***Morococcyx erythropygus***

Heard only. I heard two birds calling loudly around camp late in the afternoon at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16, but they passed through quickly before I could find them.

CAPRIMULGIDAE (Nightjars and Allies)

Lesser Nighthawk

Chordeiles acutipennis

On Nov. 16, four birds were seen at dusk in the Heloderma Reserve at the junction of the short access road and the dirt road leading to El Arenal.

Common Pauraque

Nyctidromus albigollis

A pre-dawn walk on the trails at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10 produced three birds, including one seen very well roosting on the ground.

Mexican Whip-poor-will

Antrostomus arizonae

On Oct. 28, Esteban and I tracked down a single individual after dark just up the hill from his guesthouse. After flushing the bird, it settled in an exposed area where we had a great close-up look in the light. After dark on the 29th, we heard one calling just outside the Cuchumatán Regional Park entrance. Also heard before dawn at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 7.

APODIDAE (Swifts)

Chestnut-collared Swift

Streptoprocne rutila

Five birds were seen at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

White-collared Swift

Streptoprocne zonaris

A flock of about eight birds was spotted from a ridge at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Two were seen at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Vaux's Swift

Chaetura vauxi

A flock of about 20 birds was seen at the entrance to Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Three birds were observed from a ridge at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Ten birds were found along the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift

Panyptila cayennensis

Late in the afternoon of Nov. 5, two birds were seen at great height from the grounds at Los Tarrales, the identification made by their size, shape and flight profile.

TROCHILIDAE (Hummingbirds)

Mexican Violetear

Colibri thalassinus

On Oct. 23, one was found just after reaching the ridge at Fuentes Georginas, and another on the access road later in the day. On the 24th, two were seen on the ridge trail and one along the access road. My final walk along the access road at Fuentes Georginas produced three birds on the morning of Oct. 25. One was seen around Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán park on Oct. 28. Two were found at Aldea Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Rivoli's Hummingbird***Eugenes fulgens***

At least one male and one female were at the feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20, and just one bird there on the 21st.

Amethyst-throated Mountain-gem***Lampornis amethystinus***

Both a male and female were seen on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. One was found at Puerta del Cielo at Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28.

Green-throated Mountain-gem***Lampornis viridipallens***

At least one male and one female were at the feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20, and just one bird there on the 21st. One or two birds were seen along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on both Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. One was spotted at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Common at Ranchitos del Quetzal from Nov. 13-15, and along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Garnet-throated Hummingbird***Lamprolaima rhami***

A hotspot just before the entrance to the Cuchumatán Regional Park provided good looks at three birds on Oct. 28.

Slender Sheartail***Doricha enicura***

A female was quite active in a bank of flowers near the bottom of the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. A spectacular male was at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Sparkling-tailed Hummingbird***Tilmatura dupontii***

A stop at the Hotel Atitlan on the morning of Nov. 8 produced one fantastic male in the garden.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird***Archilochus colubris***

My first sighting was of a female on the trail up from Esteban's guesthouse at Chiabal on Oct. 28. About four birds were in a bank of flowers on the lowest section of the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Two were found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. A male was at IMAP on Nov. 2. One was seen at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Common at Los Tarrales from Nov. 4-6. Common at Aldea Los Robles on Nov. 7 and the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. One female was seen along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird***Selasphorus platycercus***

Two birds were sighted on the trail just up from Esteban's guesthouse in Chiabal in the early morning of Oct. 28.

Wine-throated Hummingbird***Selasphorus ellioti***

Three males were seen on a foggy afternoon along the access road at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. The next day on the 24th, one was found near the pools and another along the access road. My final walk along the access road at Fuentes Georginas produced about five wonderful males.

White-eared Hummingbird***Basilinna leucotis***

On both Oct. 23 and 24 at Fuentes Georginas, one was found on the ridge trail, and another along the access road. A further two birds were seen along the access road on the 25th. One was observed at Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28. One was at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. An interesting sighting at the tanager spot on Nov. 3 was one bird taking a bath in some water trapped on the surface of a leaf. One was seen along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Rufous Sabrewing***Pampa rufa***

My only sighting was of one bird at the feeders at Finca El Pilar on both Oct. 20 and 21.

White-bellied Emerald***Chlorestes candida***

Common in the forest along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov 4 and 5.

Blue-throated Goldentail***Chlorestes eliciae***

My only sighting was of one bird at the *Verbena* flowers between the main cabins and the beginning of the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

Emerald-chinned Hummingbird***Abeillia abeillei***

A single male was seen in the roadside bushes at Mirador Rey Tepepul on both Oct. 31 and Nov. 1.

Violet Sabrewing***Campylopterus hemileucurus***

One was at the feeders at Finca El Pilar on both Oct. 20 and 21. Common at Ranchitos del Quetzal from Nov. 11-15.

Azure-crowned Hummingbird***Saucerottia cyanocephala***

On Oct. 20 at Finca El Pilar, two birds were spotted at the feeders, and one more around the cabins about 5 km up the road. One was at Hotel Tolimán on both Nov. 2 and 3. One was seen at the Hotel Bambú on Nov. 6, and three at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. Common at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Two were spotted along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Berylline Hummingbird***Saucerottia beryllina***

One or two birds were at the feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20 and 21. Common at the Hotel Tolimán on both Nov. 2 and 3. Small numbers were seen in the *Verbena* bushes at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4 and 5.

Blue-tailed Hummingbird***Saucerottia cyanura***

A poor look at one bird, identified by Josue, at Hotel Tolimán. A fantastic look at a male at the Hotel Bambú on Nov. 6.

Cinnamon Hummingbird

Amazilia rutila

Very common at Los Tarrales from Nov. 4-6. One bird was found at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 17.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird

Amazilia tzacatl

One was seen at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

RALLIDAE (Rails, Gallinules and Coots)

Ruddy Crake

Laterallus ruber

At Laguna Chichoj on Nov. 11, I accidentally flushed one bird which popped up and quickly re-entered cover, but I was able to tease another one partially out of the reeds, allowing me to see his grey head and about half of his rufous body.

Common Gallinule

Gallinula galeata

Around 10-12 birds were on Lake Atitlan at IMAP on Nov. 2.

American Coot

Fulica americana

Common on Lake Atitlan at IMAP on Nov. 2. Three were seen from the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. One was at Laguna Chichoj on Nov. 11.

SCOLOPACIDAE (Sandpipers and Allies)

Spotted Sandpiper

Actitis macularius

Only seen once as the launch I was taking to San Marcos La Laguna was making the dock on Nov. 9.

ARDEIDAE (Hérons, Egrets and Bitterns)

Great Blue Heron

Ardea herodias

One was observed from the launch as I travelled from Santiago Atitlan to Panajachel on Nov. 8.

Great Egret

Ardea alba

One was seen on Lake Atitlan from San Pedro La Laguna on Oct. 29, with occasional later sightings around the lake as well.

CATHARTIDAE (New World Vultures)

Black Vulture

Coragyps atratus

Common.

Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

Common.

ACCIPITRIDAE (Hawks, Eagles and Kites)

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Accipiter striatus

A bird in flight was spotted along the Finca Santa Rosa Road on Nov. 14.

Roadside Hawk

Rupornis magnirostris

My only sighting was of one bird on the Lagoon trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

STRIGIDAE (Owls)

Middle American Screech-Owl

Megascops guatemalae

Heard only. Commonly heard after dusk and before dawn at the Heloderma Reserve, but I couldn't tempt one to show itself.

Great Horned Owl

Bubo virginianus

Heard only. Heard calling at the tanager spot on Nov. 3.

Fulvous Owl

Strix fulvescens

Two birds were heard calling from the parking lot at Fuentes Georginas at 5:30 am on Oct. 23. Finally, efforts paid off and I had a great sighting of a bird right by my cabin, cabin #9, at dawn on Oct. 24. Two more were heard from the parking lot before dawn on Oct. 25.

Mottled Owl

Strix virgata

Heard only. Heard before dawn at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Northern Pygmy-Owl

Glaucidium gnoma

We found one bird in a forest patch beyond the town of Todos Santos Cuchumatán on Oct. 28. It remained partially obscured high up in a tree. One was also heard later the same day after dusk while we were searching for Unspotted Saw-whet Owl in the Puerta del Cielo area.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl

Glaucidium brasilianum

Heard only. Heard before dawn at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Also heard on both Nov. 16 and 17 at the Heloderma Reserve.

Unspotted Saw-whet Owl

Aegolius ridgwayi

Esteban called in two birds for a magnificent sighting in the Puerta del Cielo area after dark on Oct. 28.

TROGONIDAE (Trogons)

Collared Trogon

Trogon collaris

Heard at Finca El Pilar on both Oct. 20 and 21. Also heard at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Two were found in a fruiting tree above the accommodations at Ranchitos del Quetzal in the early morning of Nov. 13.

Mountain Trogon***Trogon mexicanus***

Two males were found on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. Heard in the Puerta del Cielo area on Oct. 28. One male was found along the Finca Santa Rosa Road on Nov. 14.

Elegant Trogon***Trogon elegans***

A pair was found at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16 near the main building. I had a brief look at the male, but the female was seen very well.

MOMOTIDAE (Motmots)**Tody Motmot*****Hylomanes momotula***

As I was climbing up the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6, I flushed one bird, but it only flew a short distance and perched in the open for a fantastic look. On the way down the other side of the trail later in the morning, I found another individual as well.

Blue-throated Motmot***Aspatha gularis***

A challenging bird to locate. My only sighting was of one bird in a forest patch beyond the town of Todos Santos Cuchumatán on Oct. 28.

Russet-crowned Motmot***Momotus mexicanus***

One bird was seen very well down along the main dirt road to the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16, not far from the short access road up to the HQ.

Lesson's Motmot***Momotus lessonii***

Commonly seen around the lodge buildings during my stay at Los Tarrales. Also seen on the Rinconada trail. One was found in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. One came to a fruiting tree at the accommodations at Ranchitos del Quetzal in the early morning of Nov. 13, and two more were seen there on the 15th.

Turquoise-browed Motmot***Eumomota superciliosa***

On the morning of Nov. 17, I walked down the short access road to the Heloderma Reserve and found one perched bird at the junction with the main dirt road.

RAMPHASTIDAE (Toucans)**Northern Emerald Toucanet*****Aulacorhynchus prasinus***

Three birds were seen well on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. A single bird was seen on the ridge trail the next day on the 24th. A fine look at two birds in a fruiting tree in the HQ area at the Biotopo del Quetzal on Nov. 13. A last bird was seen on the trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 14.

Collared Araçari***Pteroglossus torquatus***

Commonly spotted at the banana feeders during my stay at Los Tarrales, and occasionally seen on the Rinconada trail as well.

PICIDAE (Woodpeckers)**Acorn Woodpecker*****Melanerpes formicivorus***

After seeing six birds on my first day at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20, this species was not seen again.

Golden-fronted Woodpecker***Melanerpes aurifrons***

One was observed high up in the fruiting tree at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Rather common around Los Tarrales Lodge, and at the banana feeders. Two birds were seen at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker***Sphyrapicus varius***

A juvenile bird was found on the ridge trail to the mirador at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 24.

Hairy Woodpecker***Dryobates villosus***

A male was spotted at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Two birds were seen on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. One was found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31, and another at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

Northern Flicker***Colaptes auratus***

Rather common with my first sighting being two birds at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. Very common throughout the Cuchumatanes mountains region on Oct. 28. Singles were seen at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12 and 14.

Pale-billed Woodpecker***Campephilus guatemalensis***

A male was seen at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

FALCONIDAE (Falcons and Caracaras)**Laughing Falcon*****Herpetotheres cachinnans***

Heard only. Heard from the lodge area at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Barred Forest-Falcon***Micrastur ruficollis***

Occasionally heard at Ranchitos del Quetzal, and then on the morning of Nov. 15, one flew right past me as I walked to the reception area.

American Kestrel***Falco sparverius***

A perched bird was found near the buildings at the bottom of the trail at Finca el Pilar on Oct. 21. Another was spotted along the trail up from the guesthouse in Chiabal on the morning of Oct. 28. We encountered one bird at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

PSITTACIDAE (New World and African Parrots)

Pacific Parakeet

Psittacara strenuus

My initial sighting was of a flock of about 12 birds flying through the thick fog along the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. Good views at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31 with several flocks in flight and five birds perched. One big flock was spotted in the same area the next day on Nov. 1. A big flock of about 17 birds was seen well at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Also sighted at Los Tarrales Lodge. Four birds were seen at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Orange-fronted Parakeet

Eupsittula canicularis

Common at Los Tarrales Lodge. Flocks were common at the Heloderma Reserve throughout my stay, with two birds seen well perched on Nov. 15.

Orange-chinned Parakeet

Brotogeris jugularis

Common at Los Tarrales Lodge.

White-fronted Parrot

Amazona albifrons

As I walked down the short entrance road at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 17, a small flock flew quickly by overhead and landed, and I managed to get a good look at two perched White-fronted Parrots before they flew off.

THAMNOPHILIDAE (Typical Antbirds)

Barred Antshrike

Thamnophilus doliatus

A female was seen well on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4. A nice male was found on the Rinconada trail on Nov. 6.

GRALLARIIDAE (Antpittas)

Scaled Antpitta

Grallaria guatemalensis

Before sunrise at Chajbaoc on Nov. 10, we had a glimpse of an adult along the trail, but it hopped into cover and disappeared. A short while later, we had better success with a longer view of a juvenile also along the trail.

FURNARIIDAE (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

Middle American Leaf Tosser

Sclerurus mexicanus

As the Rinconada trail begins to climb, there is a bench on the right-hand side, and it was here that I heard a Middle American Leaf Tosser on Nov. 5. A short bit of playback resulted in the bird flying up from below, brushing my pant leg as it flew by. Unfortunately, it succeeded in hiding very well and I couldn't get a good look at it. Fortunately, I was able to find and get a great look at one bird on the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

Spotted Woodcreeper***Xiphorhynchus erythropygius***

Fairly common at Ranchitos del Quetzal, with singles seen daily. One bird was seen at the Biotopo del Quetzal as well.

Spot-crowned Woodcreeper***Lepidocolaptes affinis***

One was spotted at the ridge beyond Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. One was at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 15.

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner***Anabacerthia variegaticeps***

Rather common at Ranchitos del Quetzal, with more or less daily sightings of a couple of birds during my stay. One was also seen at the Biotopo del Quetzal.

PIPRIDAE (Manakins)**Long-tailed Manakin*****Chiroxiphia linearis***

Just one sighting of a female along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

TITYRIDAE (Tityras and Allies)**Masked Tityra*****Tityra semifasciata***

Two birds were seen at the ridge beyond Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. One was in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Rose-throated Becard***Pachyramphus aglaiae***

A female was seen well at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Another female was spotted roadside at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1, followed by one more in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

TYRANNIDAE (Tyrant Flycatchers)**Yellow-bellied Elaenia*****Elaenia flavogaster***

On Nov. 2, single birds were observed in the garden at the Hotel Tolimán and at IMAP. On Nov. 3, my second visit to the Hotel Tolimán produced one more.

Guatemalan Tyrannulet***Zimmerius vilissimus***

I was able to watch one bird feeding on mistletoe berries in a tree near the bottom of the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. A nice look at one bird in a tall tree behind the accommodations at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 15.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher***Mionectes oleaginus***

One bird was found along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. In the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10, two birds were spotted.

Northern Bentbill***Oncostoma cinereigulare***

One was seen briefly but well as I descended the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4. Also heard in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Common Tody-Flycatcher***Todirostrum cinereum***

One bird was found in the garden at the Hotel Tolimán on Nov. 2. A single bird frequented the *Verbena* bushes outside my room in Las Chachas at Los Tarrales throughout my stay.

Eye-ringed Flatbill***Rhynchocyclus brevirostris***

One was seen well in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Relatively common at Ranchitos del Quetzal with good looks at single birds on Nov. 11, 14 and 15.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher***Tolmomyias sulphurescens***

A nice scope look at one bird as we walked the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Belted Flycatcher***Xenotriccus callizonus***

Patience paid off at a hotspot at Los Robles where Lester and I had an obscured yet good look at one skulking individual on Nov. 7.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher***Empidonax flaviventris***

One was seen in the pre-dawn light at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

White-throated Flycatcher***Empidonax albigularis***

A short burst of playback was enough to bring in one responsive bird at Laguna Chichoj on Nov. 11.

Hammond's Flycatcher***Empidonax hammondii***

One bird was found early in the morning around the hummingbird feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. It was foraging from a low perch, and constantly pumping its tail. One was also found up the trail from the guesthouse in Chiabal on the morning of Oct. 28. Sightings of single birds on both Nov. 15 and 16 at the Heloderma Reserve.

Pine Flycatcher***Empidonax affinis***

A fine look at one bird up the trail from the guesthouse in Chiabal early in the morning of Oct. 28.

Yellowish Flycatcher***Empidonax flavescens***

One smart looking bird was found in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Another was seen at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 15.

Buff-breasted Flycatcher***Empidonax fulvifrons***

One was spotted on the trail up from the guesthouse in Chiabal early in the morning of Oct. 28. A nice sighting of one bird at Los Robles on Nov. 6.

Greater Pewee***Contopus pertinax***

Seen once on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30, and also at Los Robles on Nov. 6.

Northern Tropical Pewee***Contopus bogotensis***

Single birds were spotted at Mirador Rey Tepepul on both Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. On Nov. 5 at Los Tarrales, one was found along the entrance road, and another along the Rinconada trail. Another was seen on the Rinconada trail the next day on the 6th.

Black Phoebe***Sayornis nigricans***

A walk on the Lagoon trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5 produced one bird at the lagoon.

Social Flycatcher***Myiozetetes similis***

My first sighting was of a single bird along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Another was spotted at IMAP on Nov. 2. Occasional sightings around the lodge at Los Tarrales.

Great Kiskadee***Pitangus sulphuratus***

One was quite vocal along the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. One was also found at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Boat-billed Flycatcher***Megarynchus pitangua***

One was found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. Another was observed on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. Common at the Heloderma Reserve.

Tropical Kingbird***Tyrannus melancholicus***

Strangely scarce with just three birds found around the lodge at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher***Myiarchus tuberculifer***

A single bird was found along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. One was also seen in a coffee plantation at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

Ash-throated Flycatcher***Myiarchus cinerascens***

Rather common at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16 with a total of four birds seen.

Brown-crested Flycatcher***Myiarchus tyrannulus***

One bird was spotted near the end of the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

VIREONIDAE (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers and Erpornis)

Yellow-throated Vireo

Vireo flavifrons

One was seen well on the Lagoon trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Blue-headed Vireo

Vireo solitarius

First sighted at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Single birds were also spotted roadside at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1, at the tanager spot on Nov. 3, at Los Robles on Nov. 7, at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10 and at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 15..

Vireo sp.

A vireo was seen briefly along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14, but it was impossible to tell for sure if it was Blue-headed Vireo or the localized subspecies of Plumbeous Vireo. According to Rudy, Plumbeous Vireo becomes more common the further down the road you go, but my sighting was only a few kilometres from the junction with the main road.

Hutton's Vireo

Vireo huttoni

My only sighting was of one bird on Oct. 24 along the short mirador trail accessed to the right as you summit the ridge at Fuentes Georginas.

Lesser Greenlet

Pachysylvia decurtata

Relatively common on my hikes on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales.

Green Shrike-Vireo

Vireolanus pulchellus

A great look at one bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4 as it skulked through thick vines. Fortunately, it was roughly at eye level as I was descending the trail, and it popped into the open from time to time and even vocalized once.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike

Cyclarhis gujanensis

A good look at one calling bird at the tanager spot on Nov. 3.

CORVIDAE (Crows, Jays and Magpies)

Steller's Jay

Cyanocitta stelleri

On Oct. 28, Esteban and I first found several birds on the trail up from the guesthouse at Chiabal early in the morning, and we bumped into several others over the rest of the day as we explored a number of sites in the Cuchumatanes mountains. Two were spotted at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

White-throated Magpie-Jay

Calocitta formosa

Relatively common around the lodge buildings at Los Tarrales, sometimes coming to the fruit feeders.

Bushy-crested Jay***Cyanocorax melanocyaneus***

Common at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20 and 21. I managed to spot one bird amongst a rapid and skulking flock along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Rather common at Mirador Rey Tepepul. We saw a flock of eight birds at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Six birds were spotted at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. I spotted a flock of five birds along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14. Also very common at the Heloderma Reserve.

Azure-hooded Jay***Cyanolyca cucullata***

Heard only. Heard a few times at Ranchitos del Quetzal, but frustratingly, they remained unseen. I had expected them to be much easier at this site.

Black-throated Jay***Cyanolyca pumilo***

An active flock was encountered late in the morning along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23, but by this time the fog had rolled in, making it difficult to see much of anything. Only one bird was actually seen rather poorly, but clearly enough to make the identification. The next day along the ridge trail, I bumped into another active flock, and this time I saw two birds quite well under better lighting conditions. On Oct. 25, a flock was active at the entrance gate to Fuentes Georginas, and again, two birds were seen well.

Unicoloured Jay***Aphelocoma unicolor***

As I walked the access road under heavy fog on the afternoon of Oct. 24 at Fuentes Georginas, two jays flew into a nearby tree. One vocalized, which was enough to clinch the identification. Very common around Ranchitos del Quetzal with sightings daily. A flock was also seen at a fruiting tree at the nearby Biotopo del Quetzal on Nov. 13 as well.

HIRUNDINIDAE (Swallows)**Black-capped Swallow*****Atticora pileata***

A flock of six at Los Robles on Nov. 7 proved to be my only sighting.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow***Stelgidopteryx serripennis***

Several were present in the garden at the Hotel Tolimán during each of my two visits. Just one was seen over the football field at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6. Five were seen at the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8.

POLIOPTILIDAE (Gnatcatchers)**Long-billed Gnatwren*****Ramphocaenus melanurus***

My only sighting was of a single bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

White-lored Gnatcatcher***Polioptila albiloris***

Quite common at the Heloderma Reserve along the main dirt road near the short access road to the reserve with a total of four birds seen well on Nov. 16.

TROGLODYTIDAE (Wrens)**House Wren*****Troglodytes aedon***

One was found in the open areas around the buildings at the top of my route, about 5 km up the road at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. One was seen along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Birds were seen roadside on both of my visits to Mirador Rey Tepepul. One was in the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. Heard at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Rufous-browed Wren***Troglodytes rufociliatus***

My first sighting at Fuentes Georginas was of one bird along the access road on the afternoon on Oct. 22. Thereafter, birds were commonly seen during my visits along the ridge trail, and even around the parking lot. My only other sighting was of a single bird at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

Band-backed Wren***Campylorhynchus zonatus***

Rather common and vocal at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20 and 21, but skulking birds took some work to see well. A small party was heard along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. One was spotted roadside at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Heard at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Three birds were seen at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Rufous-naped Wren***Campylorhynchus rufinucha***

Two were spotted in the *Verbena* bushes in front of my accommodations in Las Chachas at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. Two more were seen along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6. A final two birds were seen at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Spot-breasted Wren***Pheugopedius maculipectus***

Single birds were seen on both of my hikes along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Cabanis's Wren***Cantorchilus modestus***

A skulking bird was found at the beginning of the ridge on the morning of Nov. 1 beyond Mirador Rey Tepepul. A glimpse of one at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. A better look at one bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6. Heard at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

White-breasted Wood-Wren***Henichorhina leucosticta***

A good look at one bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5, with another seen along the same trail on the 6th.

Grey-breasted Wood-Wren***Henicorhina leucoptera***

Two were seen well at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. One or two birds were seen on each of my hikes along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas. One was spotted at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Fairly common by voice at Ranchitos del Quetzal, Biotopo del Quetzal and the Finca Santa Rosa road, with only one bird seen at Ranchitos on Nov. 13.

MIMIDAE (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)**Grey Catbird*****Dumutella carolinensis***

One bird was spotted at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Very common along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14 with a total of seven birds seen.

Tropical Mockingbird***Mimus gilvus***

First spotted in Santiago Atitlan on Oct. 30. Two birds were seen at IMAP on Nov. 2. One was found at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Blue-and-white Mockingbird***Melanotis hypoleucus***

Heard at Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28, but the bird remained frustratingly unseen. At Los Robles on Nov. 7, we had a brief look at one bird as it quickly flew across the trail in front of us, and another was first heard and then seen calling from a distant tree.

TURDIDAE (Thrushes and Allies)**Eastern Bluebird*****Sialia sialis***

Rather common in the Cuchumatanes mountains with a total of four birds seen on Oct. 28, including on the trail up from the guesthouse in Chiabal. Two more were spotted at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Brown-backed Solitaire***Myadestes occidentalis***

Common by voice, and one bird was seen well on each of my days at Finca El Pilar. Commonly seen around the parking lot at Fuentes Georginas, and also once along the ridge trail as well. Heard in the Cuchumatanes mountains on Oct. 28. Heard on both of my visits to Mirador Rey Tepepul. Heard at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Common by voice, and one was seen along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Slate-coloured Solitaire***Myadestes unicolor***

Heard at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Commonly heard at Ranchitos del Quetzal, but generally always at a distance. I finally was able to track one down for a pretty good look in the canopy along the loop trail at Ranchitos on Nov. 14. Also heard at the Biotopo del Quetzal on Nov. 13.

Swainson's Thrush***Catharus ustulatus***

Two birds were spotted at a fruiting tree at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21.

White-throated Thrush***Turdus assimilis***

Three birds were found at a fruiting tree at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. A further three birds were spotted at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. One was seen along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Rufous-collared Robin***Turdus rufitorques***

My first view was of a female bird in the fog along the entrance road to Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 22, and another was spotted in the same area on the 25th. Spotted once in the Cuchumatanes mountains on Oct. 28. Two were seen well, but at a distance, at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush***Catharus aurantirostris***

Heard only. Heard once at Los Robles on Nov. 7. Also heard at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush***Catharus mexicanus***

A single bird was seen very well on both my morning and afternoon hikes around the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

Yellow-throated Nightingale-Thrush***Catharus dryas***

On Oct. 31, while walking a short distance in on the woodcutter's trail about 1 km below the mirador at Mirador Rey Tepepul, I heard one bird singing. A short bit of playback brought the bird in for a very nice look.

Wood Thrush***Hylocichla mustelina***

One bird was seen at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Black Thrush***Turdus infuscatus***

Soon after starting the long loop trail at the Biotopo del Quetzal on the morning of Nov. 13, I found a female bird directly on the trail. It was virtually the only bird I saw on a very birdless trek.

Clay-coloured Thrush***Turdus grayi***

Very common around the lodge and at the fruit feeders at Los Tarrales throughout my stay. One bird was seen at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10, and another along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14. Single birds were seen on each of my three days at the Heloderma Reserve.

PTILIOGONATIDAE (Silky-flycatchers)

Grey Silky-flycatcher

Ptiliogonys cinereus

A small flock of three birds was seen poorly in the fog along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. Early in the morning at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31, a short walk down the trail brought me to a tree where about 40 birds were congregating. It was a very impressive sight. Two more birds were seen at Mirador Rey Tepepul the following day on Nov. 1. An additional two birds were found at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

PASSERIDAE (Old World Sparrows)

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Spotted in Quetzaltenango at the Mucha Arte Hotel as I was having breakfast on both Oct. 26 and 27. Common around the Hotel Adulam in San Pedro La Laguna on Oct. 29.

FRINGILLIDAE (Finches, Euphonias and Allies)

Yellow-throated Euphonia

Euphonia hirundinacea

Very common at the fruit feeders at Los Tarrales.

Elegant Euphonia

Chlorophonia elegantissima

A nice male was seen roadside at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1.

Blue-crowned Chlorophonia

Chlorophonia occipitalis

A brief look at a pair at the ridge beyond the mirador at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1, but they quickly flew off. A male was seen through the scope in a very tall, fruiting tree at the tanager spot on Nov. 3.

Pine Siskin

Spinus pinus

Three birds were seen in the Cuchumatanes mountains on Oct. 28.

Black-capped Siskin

Spinus atriceps

Pleasingly, birds were fairly common on the trail up from the guesthouse at Chibal on Oct. 28, and we came across several others at a couple of sites as we made our way up to the Puerta del Cielo area later in the day.

Black-headed Siskin

Spinus notatus

Four birds were seen at the buildings/picnic area about 5 km up the road at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. One was in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Lesser Goldfinch

Spinus psaltria

A male was seen just after reaching the large, open area about 5 km up the road at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. Four birds were found along the lower reaches of the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Two were spotted at Los Robles on Nov. 7, and another at the Hotel Atitlan on the 8th.

Hooded Grosbeak***Coccothraustes abeillei***

Heard only. Heard once at the tanager spot on Nov. 3.

PASSERELLIDAE (New World Sparrows)**Common Chlorospingus*****Chlorospingus flavopectus***

Common at Fuentes Georginas. Mirador Rey Tepepul, Chajbaoc Reserve and at Ranchitos del Quetzal.

White-naped Brushfinch***Atlapetes albinucha***

One was skulking on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. The parking lot at Fuentes Georginas proved to be a reliable spot in the very early morning as one bird was foraging there on Oct. 24, and two on the 25th. Two were seen in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28.

Chestnut-capped Brushfinch***Arremon brunneinucha***

One bird was seen just past the hummingbird feeders at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Rather common at Fuentes Georginas during my stay, including along the ridge trail and the area around the pools. Single birds were found on both my morning and afternoon hikes along the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

White-faced Ground-Sparrow***Melospiza bicolor***

A well-known site is the first several hundred metres of the Rostro Maya trail, and it was indeed here that I found two pairs on Oct. 30, my only sightings of the trip.

White-eared Ground-Sparrow***Melospiza leucotis***

First seen in a forest patch just beyond the town of Todos Santos Cuchumatán on Oct. 28. A good look at one bird at the mirador on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

Spotted Towhee***Pipilo maculatus***

One was seen well on the trail up from the guesthouse in Chiabal on Oct. 28, and we came across one other bird later the same day.

Rusty Sparrow***Aimophila rufescens***

Two were spotted on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Just one was found at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Savannah Sparrow***Passerculus sandwichensis***

Two birds were found in an open grassland area on our drive up to the Puerta del Cielo area in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28.

Lincoln's Sparrow***Melospiza lincolnii***

One bird was seen well on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Another was found along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Rufous-collared Sparrow***Zonotrichia capensis***

About three birds were seen in a grassy area about 5 km up the road at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Two were found on the drive into the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28. One was spotted at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Yellow-eyed Junco***Junco phaeonotus***

Two were seen well on the trail up from the guesthouse at Chiabal on Oct. 28, and we found others in a grassland area on our drive up to the Puerta del Cielo area later in the day.

ICTERIIDAE (Yellow-breasted Chat)**Yellow-breasted Chat*****Icteria virens***

A very nice view of one bird on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Another was found on the lodge grounds at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4.

ICTERIDAE (Troupials and Allies)**Eastern Meadowlark*****Sturnella magna***

We found a total of three birds in grassland areas during our exploration of the Cuchumatanes mountains area on Oct. 28.

Melodious Blackbird***Dives dives***

Two pairs were found along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Common in the open areas around the lodge at Los Tarrales during my stay. A pair was seen at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Great-tailed Grackle***Quiscalus mexicanus***

Common around Antigua and in the built-up areas at Finca El Pilar. Also common around San Pedro La Laguna, Santiago Atitlan and other locations around Lake Atitlan. Common on the grounds at Los Tarrales as well. Just one was seen around Laguna Chichoj on Nov. 11. Common on the lower sections at the beginning of the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Bronzed Cowbird***Molothrus aeneus***

One bird was found at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Yellow-backed Oriole***Icterus chrysater***

My only sighting was of a single bird along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Spot-breasted Oriole***Icterus pectoralis***

Two birds were spotted at the fruit feeder across from Las Chachas just after my arrival at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4, and strangely, these proved to be the only two I saw during my stay.

Altamira Oriole***Icterus gularis***

One bird was at the fruit feeder near Las Chachas at Los Tarrales soon after my arrival on Nov. 4, and one was spotted in the same location on each of the next two days. One was found in the garden at the Hotel Bambú on Nov. 6.

Streak-backed Oriole***Icterus pustulatus***

Common at the Heloderma Reserve, often associating with Bushy-crested Jays.

Baltimore Oriole***Icterus galbula***

A male was first sighted at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20, and two more birds were seen there the next day on the 21st. Several were at a fruiting tree along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. On Nov. 3, several were found at the tanager spot, and at the Hotel Tolimán. Common at the fruit feeders at Los Tarrales. One was in the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8.

Orchard Oriole***Icterus spurius***

One or two males were and an occasional female were frequently seen in the *Verbena* bushes near Las Chachas at Los Tarrles during my stay. Three were found in the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8.

Black-vented Oriole***Icterus wagleri***

A distant bird was seen at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

Bar-winged Oriole***Icterus maculialatus***

A decent look from below of a male at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. His black hood and yellow vent were enough to clinch the identification, even though I couldn't see his wing and the white bar.

Yellow-billed Cacique***Amblycercus holosericeus***

One was seen well along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Chestnut-headed Oropendola***Psarocolius wagleri***

Heard at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Relatively common at Ranchitos del Quetzal where one or two flocks were seen on most days. On Nov. 13 near the visitor's centre at the Biotopo del Quetzal, a fruiting tree was drawing in a number of birds around mid-day, including 12 Chestnut-headed Oropendolas.

PARULIDAE (New World Warblers)

Ovenbird

Seiurus aurocapilla

One was seen well in some scrubby undergrowth at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Rather common in the Chajbaoc Reserve where three birds were spotted on Nov. 10. Occasional sightings of presumably the same bird near the start of the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal.

Louisiana Waterthrush

Parkesia motacilla

A little swampy area near the compost heap just after the start of the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal proved to be reliable for this species, and I saw a single bird there very early on two different mornings.

Blue-winged Warbler

Vermivora cyanoptera

A quick look at one bird at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Golden-winged Warbler

Vermivora chrysoptera

We spotted three birds in total at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. A final sighting of one at the Biotopo del Quetzal on Nov. 13.

Black-and-white Warbler

Mniotilta varia

Common and widespread. Common on both visits to Finca El Pilar with a high of four birds seen on Oct. 20. Just one bird was seen at Fuentes Georginas along the ridge trail on Oct. 23. One more was spotted in the Cuchumatanes mountains on Oct. 28. Small numbers were seen on both days at Mirador Rey Tepepul. We found two birds at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Regularly seen on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales. We found three birds in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Occasional sightings at Ranchitos del Quetzal and along the Finca Santa Rosa road. My final sighting was of a single bird at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Tennessee Warbler

Leiothlypis peregrina

Common and widespread. Small numbers were found at Finca El Pilar on both Oct. 20 and 21. Fairly common on the ridge trail and along the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas. Rather common on the Rostro Maya trail where four birds were found. A short visit to IMAP on Nov. 2 produced two birds in the scrub. Common on Nov. 3 at the tanager spot and later in the day at the Hotel Tolimán. Regularly seen on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales. Two were found in the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. We spotted three birds in total at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. A final sighting of one bird along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Nashville Warbler

Leiothlypis ruficapilla

One was seen well in some scrub at the tanager spot on Nov. 3.

Crescent-chested Warbler***Oreothlypis superciliosa***

Two were spotted at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. Another two birds were seen along the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23.

Kentucky Warbler***Geothlypis formosa***

A very good look at a single bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

MacGillivray's Warbler***Geothlypis tolmiei***

One was found Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. Another bird was seen along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Two birds were spotted along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Grey-crowned Yellowthroat***Geothlypis poliocephala***

On the afternoon of Nov. 5, we walked out along the entrance road at Los Tarrales to the highway, and Josue called in a responsive bird at what is apparently a reliable site.

Yellow Warbler***Setophaga petechia***

On Nov. 2, the scrub at IMAP proved good for Yellow Warbler as I found four birds there over a short visit. One was in the bushes in the garden at the Hotel Tolimán on Nov. 3.

Chestnut-sided Warbler***Setophaga pensylvanica***

Rather common in the Chajbaoc Reserve where five birds were spotted on Nov. 10.

Magnolia Warbler***Setophaga magnolia***

One was found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1, and another at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. One more was spotted along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. Rather common in the Chajbaoc Reserve where four birds were spotted on Nov. 10. Two birds were found along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler***Setophaga coronata***

One was found on the trail up from the guesthouse at Chiabal on Oct. 23.

Goldman's Warbler***Setophaga goldmani***

As we drove up towards Puerta del Cielo in the afternoon of Oct. 28, we stopped at a couple of sites and found two impressive birds. This split from Yellow-rumped Warbler is not yet accepted by the ebird/Clements checklist.

Black-throated Green Warbler***Setophaga virens***

Rather common in the Chajbaoc Reserve where three birds were spotted on Nov. 10. Several sightings along the trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal, but quite common along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14 where six birds were found.

Townsend's Warbler***Setophaga townsendi***

Common and widespread. Very common at Finca El Pilar. Common on the ridge trail and along the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas. Two birds were seen on our day in the Cuchumatanes mountains on Oct. 28. Just one was spotted on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Common on both visits to Mirador Rey Tepepul. Also common at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Two were found at Los Robles on Nov. 7. Two birds were found along the Finca Santa Rosa road on Nov. 14.

American Redstart***Setophaga ruticilla***

A single male was found in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Hooded Warbler***Setophaga citrina***

A good look at a male on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4. A further two males were found in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Golden-crowned Warbler***Basileuterus culicivorus***

My first sighting was of two birds at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. Fairly common on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales. One was found in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Rufous-capped Warbler***Basileuterus rufifrons***

One bird was spotted along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 6.

Golden-browed Warbler***Basileuterus belli***

Just one bird was observed at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. Very common on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas on both visits. Four birds were seen on my morning hike around the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12, but birds were absent thereafter.

Wilson's Warbler***Cardellina pusilla***

Common and widespread. Extremely common on both visits to Finca El Pilar, with more than ten individuals counted on Oct. 21. Also fairly common on the ridge trail and the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas. Two were spotted on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. Small numbers were seen on both days at Mirador Rey Tepepul. One bird was found at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Just one sighting of a single bird along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. Two were found at Los Robles on Nov. 7. Rather common in the Chajbaoc Reserve where four birds were spotted on Nov. 10. Rather common also along the Finca Santa Rosa road where an additional four birds were seen on Nov. 14.

Red-faced Warbler***Cardellina rubrifrons***

My only sighting was of a single bird at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21.

Pink-headed Warbler***Cardellina versicolor***

Rather common on the ridge trail, especially the upper parts, at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23 where I was able to have wonderful looks at five different individuals. Only two were seen the next day on the 24th, this time on the short mirador trail branching to the right at the ridge. A final sighting of one bird at Puerta del Cielo in the Cuchumatán Regional Park on Oct. 28.

Slate-throated Redstart***Myioborus miniatus***

Two birds were found at Finca El Pilar on both Oct. 20 and 21. At Fuentes Georginas, a single bird was found on the ridge trail on Oct. 23, and another along the entrance road on the 24th. One bird was at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. Two were found on the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5, and another one on the 6th. Two more birds were spotted in the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. Relatively common at Ranchitos del Quetzal, Biotopo del Quetzal and along the Finca Santa Rosa road.

CARDINALIDAE (Cardinals and Allies)**Yellow Grosbeak*****Pheucticus chrysopheplus***

Quite common at the Heloderma Reserve, especially along the main dirt road. Birds tended to associate with Bushy-crested Jays and Streak-backed Orioles in multi-species flocks.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak***Pheucticus ludovicianus***

Three birds (male and two females) were found at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. A female was seen on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30, and a male at Mirador Rey Tepepul the next day on the 31st. A male was found along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4. One was spotted at Los Robles on Nov. 7. Occasional sighting at Ranchitos del Quetzal, including five birds in a fruiting tree behind the accommodations on the morning of Nov. 15.

Blue Grosbeak***Passerina caerulea***

A female was found along the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

Indigo Bunting***Passerina cyanea***

A female was found along the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. A male was spotted at Los Robles on Nov. 7.

White-winged Tanager***Piranga leucoptera***

A pair was found at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 20. A male was seen along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on two occasions.

Summer Tanager***Piranga rubra***

Two males were found at Finca El Pilar on Oct. 21. We saw one in the Cuchumatanes mountains area on Oct. 28. A female was spotted on the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30. A male was found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Oct. 31. At Los Tarrales, I found a male on the Rinconada trail on Nov. 4, and another along the entrance road on the 5th. Another male was found at Los Robles on Nov. 7, and a female at the Hotel Atitlan on the 8th. Sightings of a female and an immature male at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 15 and 16 respectively.

Western Tanager***Piranga ludoviciana***

While I was scanning through the scope into the tall fruiting tree at the tanager spot on Nov. 3, a pair flew in and perched at the very top of the tree for a few moments.

Red-throated Ant-Tanager***Habia fuscicauda***

One male was spotted along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5, and a female at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Painted Bunting***Passerina ciris***

Four colourful males were along the entrance road at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

THRAUPIDAE (Tanagers and Allies)**Blue-grey Tanager*****Thraupis episcopus***

Unexpectedly scarce at Los Tarrales with only one pair being seen at the fruit feeder behind the dining area just before I checked out on Nov. 6.

Yellow-winged Tanager***Thraupis abbas***

A hike along the Rostro Maya trail on Oct. 30 produced a pair. Three birds were found at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Quite common at the tanager spot on Nov. 3 with four birds being seen. Rather common at the fruit feeders at Los Tarrales during my stay.

Azure-rumped Tanager***Poecilostreptus cabanisi***

After striking out at Mirador Rey Tepepul, I arranged with Lester on Nov. 3 to visit a location where a tall fruiting tree was reputed to be reliable for Azure-rumped Tanager, and a short wait was all it took before a pair came in to feed in the canopy. Good looks through the scope.

Red-legged Honeycreeper***Cyanerpes cyaneus***

Two birds were spotted as I was relaxing around the Hotel Adulam at San Pedro La Laguna on Oct. 29. Quite common at Mirador Rey Tepepul with good numbers seen on both of my visits. Also common at the tanager spot on Nov. 3. Quite common along the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales.

Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer***Diglossa baritula***

First seen on a very foggy walk along the entrance road at Fuentes Georginas on Oct. 23. On the 24th, single birds were seen along the ridge trail and also around the pools. Two birds were found on the trail up from the guesthouse at Chiabal on Oct. 28. Two were seen in the garden at the Hotel Atitlan on Nov. 8. A walk along the Finca Santa Rosa road produced one bird on Nov. 14.

Morelet's Seedeater***Sporophila moreletii***

A small flock, including one male and several females, was spotted in some long grass at IMAP on Nov. 2.

Yellow-faced Grassquit***Tiaris olivaceus***

My only sighting was of a male at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10.

Cinnamon-bellied Saltator***Saltator grandis***

First seen at IMAP on Nov. 2 with a single bird present in the scrub. Another was found around the lodge at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4.

Black-headed Saltator***Saltator atriceps***

A good look at a single bird along the road at Mirador Rey Tepepul on Nov. 1. Rather common at the fruit feeders at Los Tarrales during my stay, and also occasionally seen along the Rinconada trail. Two birds were found at the Chajbaoc Reserve on Nov. 10. A final two birds were spotted at the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

Mammal List**CANIDAE (Dogs)****Coyote*****Canis latrans***

Heard only. Heard calling at night from the station in the Heloderma Reserve on Nov. 16.

PROCYONIDAE (Raccoons)**White-nosed Coati*****Nasua narica***

Attracted by the abundance of food left around by visitors to the thermal baths, coatis were commonly seen in groups at Fuentes Georginas.

CERVIDAE (Deer)**White-tailed Deer*****Odocoileus virginianus***

Spotted once at the bottom of the Rinconada trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5.

DASYPROCTIDAE (Agoutis and Acouchys)

Central American Agouti

Dasyprocta punctata

Spotted foraging around my room in Las Chachas at Los Tarrales on Nov. 4 and 5, with a high of four seen on one occasion. Seen once on the Rinconada trail on Nov. 5 as well.

SCIURIDAE (Tree, Flying and Ground Squirrels, Chipmunks, Marmots and Prairie Dogs)

Deppe's Squirrel

Sciurus deppei

Rather common overall, with sightings at Finca El Pilar, Fuentes Georginas, Mirador Rey Tepepul. tanager hotspot, Los Tarrales and at the Chajbaoc Reserve.

Variegated Squirrel

Sciurus variegatoides

Single sightings on the ridge trail at Fuentes Georginas, Mirador Rey Tepepul and the tanager hotspot. Spotted on both Nov. 12 and 13 at Ranchitos del Quetzal.

Reptile List

Peters' Anole

Norops petersi

One individual of what was perhaps this species was seen at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

Motagua Spiny-tailed Iguana

Ctenosaura palearis

The Heloderma Reserve was set aside largely for the protection of this rare, endemic species, and a captive breeding program is attempting to enhance breeding success. A pen with several hibernating adults is set up near the station, and Gilberto showed me one individual. A remarkable animal.

Pond Slider

Trachemys scripta

One turtle was basking in the small lagoon on the Lagoon trail at Los Tarrales on Nov. 5. It belonged to the subspecies *troostri*, and is sometimes given the name Cumberland Slider. Presumed introduced as the natural range of this species does not reach Guatemala.

Salmon-bellied Racer

Mastigodryas melanolumus

One individual of this very beautiful species was seen very well on the loop trail at Ranchitos del Quetzal on Nov. 12.

