

Guadeloupe

23 April – 9 May 2025

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Guadeloupe Woodpecker

This report covers a 16-days holiday on Guadeloupe. It was my wife Camilla who chose this destination to celebrate her turning 60 years of age. We have been to other Caribbean islands before, but never one in the Lesser Antilles. This was a family holiday, with birding outings mostly performed in the first two or three hours of the day.

Brief daily log

April 23: Travel day from Gothenburg, via Paris (Charles de Gaulle), arriving Pointe-a-Pitre early in the evening. Taxi to our hotel in Le Gosier, southwest of Pointe-a-Pitre.

April 24: Morning birding at Pointe de la Verdure, on a trail running from Hôtel Canella Beach in Le Gosier, along the southern part of Grande Baie beach, to a bridge crossing a river to Grande Baie beach proper. Picked up our rental car and drove, in heavy rain, to our *gites* (boarding-house) at Oasis de Grande Anse, about 2 kilometers north of Deshaies, a coastal village located in the northeast of Basse-Terre. Our stay here was for five nights.

April 25: Morning birding on the steep access road to, and beyond, our boarding-house, all the way up to the quarry area. Other “activities” included beaching on Grande Anse beach, where there is also a forest trail alongside the beach. As it started to rain, we took a drive south in random.

April 26: Morning birding along Chemin Bô Rivié/Rue des Abeilles in Deshaies. Short visit to Cascade des Ecrevisses in Parc National Guadeloupe, which we soon left for Corossol Picnic Area. Late afternoon on the beach.

April 27: Morning birding along the forest trail in the forest at Grande Anse Beach. Short visit at Petite Savane outside Deshaies to try for Lesser Antillean Flycatcher, it had been reported from the area earlier in April.

April 28: Morning at Petite Savane, but rain prevented any effective birding. Afternoon highlight was Black Swifts foraging above our *gites*.

April 29: Morning birding in the vicinity of our *gites*, hoping for the swifts from yesterday afternoon to re-occur, which they did not. We drove to Trois-Rivieres on the southern coast, from where ferries to Iles des Saintes depart. Our ferry to Terre-de-Haut was in the afternoon, and upon arrival to the island, our landlady was waiting for us and brought us to our *gites*, Kazajany.

April 30: Morning walk in the village, otherwise mainly beaching and shopping. In the evening, celebrating my wife’s 60th birthday in a superb restaurant.

May 1: Our landlady drove us to a beach named Anse Crawen, from where you have a view of a couple of islands. Particularly the westernmost, Les Augustins, was teeming with seabirds. We walked back to our *gites* from here.



Les Augustins as viewed from Anse Crawen.

May 2: Morning birding was spent overlooking the strait between Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas, particularly to check another birdy island, Le Pâté, situated close to Terre-de-Bas. Later in the morning we took the ferry back to Trois-Rivieres, and from there drove to Sainte Anne on Grande-Terre, our accommodation being at Ti Village Creole, self-catered like the previous ones.

May 3: Morning birding in the residence area. After a few hours on the beach, we drove to Etang Cocoyer to look for Masked Duck which had been reported from this site earlier this year - no luck, though, as usual with this species.

May 4: After breakfast we went to Pointe des Chateaux, the peninsula on the southeastern part of Grande-Terre, with a good beach, nearby rocky islands with lots of Sooty Terns, and also some lagoons suitable for waders. Back in Sainte Anne late afternoon.

May 5: Early breakfast as today we were driving to La Soufriere, the volcano in Parc National Guadeloupe on Basse-Terre. The drive there from Sainte Anne is not very long, but traffic jams and a couple of traffic accidents caused us a severe delay in arrival; the drive took three hours. Walked the trail from the visitor centre to the tarmac road, but rather than heading up the trail on the volcano, we continued on the tarmac road to an area with radio antennas. From there, we walked the tarmac road back to the visitor centre. On the descent, we stopped at the picnic area in Beausoleil to try for Lesser Antillean Euphonia, but no luck. On our way back to Sainte Anne, we made brief stops at Mamelle de Petit Bourg and Cascade des Ecrevisses along the Route de la Traversée cutting through Parc National Guadeloupe.

May 6: Most of the day spent on the beach. Afternoon visit to Etang Fromager.

May 7: Short drive to look for birds at Petit Etang Chemin Congo close to Sainte Anne, otherwise beaching.

May 8: Brief birding at Etang Fromager before returning our rental car.

May 9: Departure day. Our connecting flight was from Martinique, and here we left the airport to get ourselves a decent lunch before flight departure.

Literature and recordings

Birds of the Lesser Antilles (Ryan Chenery)

Sound files downloaded from www.xeno-canto.org

Sites

All sites and areas birded, and mentioned in the species list and/or in the daily log, will be found by its name on www.ebird.org; I reckon this will be the most useful option to the reader.

Species list

The trip yielded a total of 68 bird species (excluding, of course, Red Junglefowl, a cause of daily annoyance). Subspecies are given for each species observed, also for the few ones seen on Martinique. Brief notes are given on distribution for endemics or near-endemics. The list below follows AviList systematics.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

4 males and 5 females at Etang Cocoyer.

Ssp: *jamaicensis*.

American Black Swift *Cypseloides niger*

7 or 8 at Oasis de Grande Anse 28/4.

Ssp: *niger*

Lesser Antillean Swift *Chaetura martinica*

A flock of about 10 seen briefly flying past Oasis de Grande Anse in the morning on 25/4. These were the only ones seen.

Monotypic. A Lesser Antillean endemic occurring from Guadeloupe to St Vincent. The best opportunities to find this species on Guadeloupe is along Route de la Traversée.

Green-throated Carib *Eulampis holosericeus*

Observed six days, including 2 individuals on Terre-de-Haut.

Ssp: *holosericeus*. A West Indian endemic, occurring on Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and Lesser Antilles.

Purple-throated Carib *Eulampis jugularis*

A stunning wet forest species observed at Corossol Picnic Area and at La Soufriere.

Monotypic. Lesser Antillean endemic found in montane forest.

Antillean Crested Hummingbird *Orthorhyncus cristatus*

Pleasantly easy to see, observed almost daily, also on Terre-de-Haut.

Ssp: *exilis*. West Indian endemic breeding in eastern Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Lesser Antilles.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

2 at Plage de Pompiere on Terre-de-Haut, and 2 at Etang Fromager.
Monotypic.



Purple-throated Carib



Antillean Crested Hummingbird

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*

Only one, along the trail inside Grande Anse beach, 28/4.
Monotypic.

Rock Dove *Columba livia* (dom.)

Observed in Sainte Anne and the outskirts of Basse-Terre town.

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala*

1 at Oasis de Grande Anse, 1 at Chemin Bô Rivié/Rue des Abeilles, Deshaies, and 1 in Sainte Anne.
Monotypic.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very common.
Introduced.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*

Observed primarily in Sainte Anne, and a single record on Terre-de-Haut. Also seen on Martinique.
Ssp: *nigrirostris* (Guadeloupe) and *trochila* (Martinique).

Bridled Quail-Dove *Geotrygon mystacea*

Recorded five days on Basse-Terre, and a single record on Terre-de-Haut – a few of these seen exceptionally well.

Monotypic. Present on Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Lesser Antilles south to St Lucia.



Bridled Quail-Dove

Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita*

Abundant.

Ssp: *aurita*, this ssp occurring Anguilla to Grenada. Except for populations on coastal northern Yucatán including Holbox, Mujeres and Cozumel islands, this species is restricted to the Caribbean.



Zenaida Dove

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Observed five days, all on Basse-Terre and Terre-de-Haut.

Ssp: *asiatica*

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

Easily seen in suitable habitat.

Ssp: *cerceris*

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

2 in Etang Cocoyer was the only record.

Ssp: *antillarum*

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

3 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *palliatus*

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A single at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *cynosurae*

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

About 10 at Grande Baie, and 2 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Monotypic.

Wilson's Plover *Anarhynchus wilsonia*

2 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *wilsonia*

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*



Seen at Grande Baie, Grande Anse, Etang Cocoyer, Petit Etang Chemin Congo at the beach in Sainte Anne.

Monotypic.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

A single seen at Pointe des Chateaux.

Monotypic.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

1 at Grande Baie, and 1 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *semipalmata*. The western subspecies *inornata* may be a separate species.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

1 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *morinella*

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

A single with Semipalmateds at Pointe des Chateaux.

Monotypic.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

A dozen at Grande Baie, and 8 or 9 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Monotypic.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

3 at Grande Baie.

Monotypic.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

A distant individual seen in the strait between Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas, common at Les Augustins and fairly common around Le Pâté.

Ssp: *stolidus*

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*

4 distant birds in the strait between Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas, common at Les Augustins, Le Pâté and Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *fuscatus*

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*

Common at Les Augustins and a single at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *melanopterus*

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

About 10 at Les Augustins, and 1 in Terre-de-Haut port area 2/5.

Ssp: *dougallii*

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

Recorded six days.

Monotypic.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Seen on three occasions only.

Ssp: *atricilla*

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*

3 at Pointe des Chateaux.

Ssp: *mesonauta*

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Up to 15 daily in the strait between Terre-de-Haut and Terre-de-Bas 30/4 to 2/5. The birds were seen in the mornings only, till about 10.00 a.m., after that they disappeared.

Ssp: *catesbyi*

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*

Recorded daily.

Monotypic.

Yellow-crowned Night-heron *Nyctanassa violacea*



2 in Deshaies and 1 at Grande Anse beach were the only records. Juveniles (pictured) are easily separated from juvenile Black-crowns by its long tibia.

Ssp: *bancrofti*

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 in late evening in Sainte Anne 3/5.

Ssp: *hoactli*

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Few records, seen three days only.

Ssp: *thula*

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Recorded six days.

Ssp: *virescens*

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Seen five days.

Ssp: *egretta*

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common.

Monotypic.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*



Recorded almost daily.

Ssp: *occidentalis*

Guadeloupe Woodpecker *Melanerpes herminieri*

The first ones were seen at the quarry in Grande Anse, after that, regular encounters but none on Terre-de-Haut.

Monotypic. The only woodpecker in the whole of the Lesser Antilles, and endemic to Guadeloupe.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

Observed five days.

Ssp: *caribaeorum*

Caribbean Elaenia *Elaenia martinica*

Recorded almost daily.

Ssp: *martinica*

Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*

Common.

Ssp: *vorax*

Lesser Antillean Pewee *Contopus latirostris*

1 at Oasis de Grande Anse, and 1 at Chemin Bô Rivié/Rue des Abeilles, Deshaies.

Ssp: *brunneicapillus*. Endemic to Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique and St Lucia. The St Lucia ssp is sometimes considered specifically distinct.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus*

Common by voice.

Ssp: *barbadensis*

Caribbean Martin *Progne dominicensis*

Regularly encountered in small numbers..

Monotypic. Endemic to the West Indies.

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*

2 at Petit Etang Chemin Congo close to Saine Anne, 1 at Ti Village Creole. Sainte Anne, 1 at Etang Fromager, and 1 near Fort-de-France airport on Martinique.

Ssp: *antillarum*

Scaly-breasted Thrasher *Allenia fusca*



2 near the quarry in Grande Anse, 1 at Chemin Bô Rivié/Rue des Abeilles, Deshaies, 1 at Corossol Picnic area, 1 in the Ti Village Creole area in Sainte Anne and 1 at Beausoleil Picnic area below La Soufriere.

Ssp: *hypenema*. This species is endemic to the Lesser Antilles.

Pearly-eyed Thrasher *Margarops fuscatus*

Observed five days in various numbers, all on Basse-Terre. Can be difficult to separate from previous species, bill colour is the easiest way, pale in Pearly-eyed, black in Scaly-breasted.

Ssp: *densirostris*. Apart from the West Indies, this species occurs only in Los Hermanos islands, off Venezuela.

Brown Trembler *Cinclocerthia ruficauda*

2 at Chemin Bô Rivié/Rue des Abeilles, Deshaies, 4 at Corossol Picnic Area, and 2 at Mamelle de Petit Bourg along Route de la Traversée.

Ssp: *tremula*. A species endemic to the Lesser Antilles.

Forest Thrush *Turdus lherminieri*



Recorded at the quarry in Grande Anse, along the trail inside Grande Anse beach, Corossol Picnic area, and at Petit Savane.

Ssp: *lherminieri*. This species is endemic to the Lesser Antilles, more easy to find on Guadeloupe than on the other islands.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A few in the cities of Sainte Anne and Le Moule.

Introduced.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

1 at Hotel Karaibes, Le Gosier 24/4, and a flock of about 30 at Etang Fromager 6/5.

Introduced.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*

About 15 at Etang Fromager 6/5.

Introduced.

Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava*

2 females at Etang Fromager 6/5.

Introduced.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

Mostly recorded in Sainte Anne.

Ssp: *minimus*. Expanding its range northwards in the Lesser Antilles.

Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris*

Abundant, but none on Terre-de-Haut.

Ssp: *guadeloupensis*

Plumbeous Warbler *Setophaga plumbea*

1 at Corossol Picnic area, 2 at Petit Savane, 1 at Ti Village Creole area in Sainte Anne, 2 on La Soufriere and 1 at Mamelle de Petit Bourg, Route de la Traversée.

Monotypic. Only occurs on Guadeloupe and Dominica.

Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

Almost daily records.

Ssp: *melanoptera*. Previously considered conspecific with American Yellow Warbler, *S. aestiva*.

Lesser Antillean Saltator *Saltator albicollis*

Fairly common.

Ssp: *guadelupensis*. A Lesser Antillean endemic, *guadelupensis* on Guadeloupe and Dominica, and nominate on Martinique and St Lucia.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

Common.

Ssp: *bartholemica*

Lesser Antillean Bullfinch *Loxigilla noctis*



Common, though not recorded on Terre-de-Haut.

Ssp: *dominicana*. Endemic to the Lesser Antilles.

Black-faced Grassquit *Melanospiza bicolor*

Quite common.

Ssp: *omissa*

Small Indian Mongoose *Urva auropunctata*



Native to Southeast Asia, introduced and now, sadly, widely spread in the Lesser Antilles. It is considered one of the worst invasive species in the world.