



RYAN CHENERY



BIRDS OF THE LESSER ANTILLES



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A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE



H E L M

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To my wonderful parents Percy and Jeanne for their unwavering support, and for encouraging me to always follow my dreams; and to my Lil Family (my beautiful wife Alex and two precious daughters Ariadne and Leilani): birding may be my passion, but the three of you are unquestionably my heart. Thank you all for your constant love and belief in me, and for allowing holidays to always be in places where we can fit in a bit of birding on the side!

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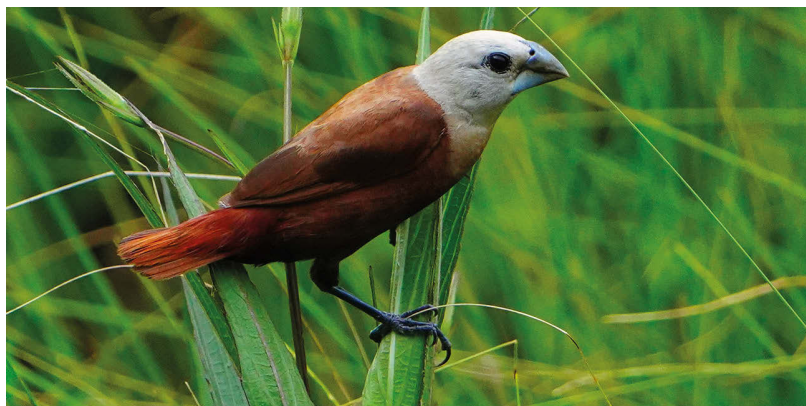
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White-headed Munia.

INTRODUCTION

The islands of the Lesser Antilles are renowned worldwide for picturesque beaches, stunning coastlines and sparkling turquoise seas – and they do indeed offer such attractions to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who visit the region every year. But look closer, and you will find that they are also home to a host of spectacular birds, many of which are threatened and often found nowhere else on the planet.

Whether you are heading off on vacation to relax on the beautiful white sand beaches of Antigua and Barbuda; on a hiking holiday through the verdant forests of the ‘Nature Lovers’ Island’ of Dominica; surfing the thunderous rollers that batter the rugged east coast of Barbados; or if you are one of the increasing number of birders targeting these islands as an adventurous and rewarding destination to add to your life list, this book will help you identify the many feathered gems to be found along this remarkable island chain.

Nestled within the easternmost part of the Caribbean, the Lesser Antilles comprises a chain of islands which, running from north to south, begins in Anguilla (18°13'23.77" N 63°03'23.88" W) and descends in a long sweeping arc culminating on the ‘Spice Isle’ of Grenada (12°06'35.89" N 61°41'36.66" W). Ideally positioned between North and South America, with the warm tranquil waters of the Caribbean Sea bordering their western coastlines and the heaving Atlantic Ocean thundering against their eastern shores, these multiple island nations are ideally situated to receive flights of birds: almost unfathomable numbers of North American migrants during autumn and spring; Old World vagrants that have inadvertently crossed the Atlantic; and even austral migrants from South America that have set off on an exploratory journey north (much like the original human colonisers of the islands did some 5,000 years ago). Added to these fascinating visitors is a wondrous array of regional breeding residents, including a wealth of endemics and near-endemics, and a host of endemic subspecies, all of which serves to ensure your birding experience in the region will be truly memorable.

BIRDLIFE ON THE LESSER ANTILLES

Species present year-round

Endemics, e.g. Imperial Parrot on Dominica, Whistling Warbler on St Vincent, Montserrat Oriole on Montserrat.

Near-endemics, e.g. Blue-headed Hummingbird on Martinique and Dominica, Plumbeous Warbler on Guadeloupe and Dominica, Grenada Flycatcher on Grenada and St Vincent, Grey Trembler on St Lucia and Martinique.

Lesser Antillean Endemics – species restricted to the Lesser Antillean region, where they are found on multiple islands, e.g. Purple-throated Carib, Scaly-breasted Thrasher, Brown Trembler, Lesser Antillean Saltator.

Breeding Residents – species that do not migrate outside of the region post-breeding, e.g. Caribbean Elaenia, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Common Ground Dove.

Species primarily present in the Lesser Antilles during spring migration (March and April) and autumn migration (July to October)

Migrant waders, waterfowl, herons and warblers, along with other migratory species such as kingfishers, grosbeaks, cuckoos and buntings.

Species primarily present in the Lesser Antilles during the summer months (May to September)

The number of terns and gulls increases significantly during summer, with several species breeding on rocky islets in the region and others merely visiting.

Migratory species present in the Lesser Antilles during the North American winter (November to February)

Although typically not in very large numbers, individuals from a variety of migratory species overwinter in the region. Therefore, a selection of migrant waders, warblers and herons, among others, can be seen on the islands between November and February.

Bird conservation

Although very popular as vacation destinations, the islands of the Lesser Antilles are not as well known in birding circles, and are often overshadowed by their larger Caribbean cousins – the Greater Antilles. These relatively gargantuan neighbours have also historically received more attention from researchers and conservation bodies. However, in recent years the focus has begun to shift, with increased research revealing that urgent action is needed on these tiny islands to prevent several species from being lost forever.

When the global population of a species is restricted to a single tiny island of 134km², it is already fighting an uphill battle for survival. But when compounded by the said island's location within a hurricane belt, destruction of crucial habitat through construction projects and land development, and predation by an invasive species, the odds of survival plummet significantly. Such is the predicament facing the demure and retiring Grenada Dove; now clinging to survival with a fragmented cumulative population of some 136 individuals remaining in two tiny pockets of dry coastal forest on Grenada. Sadly, the plight of this species does not represent an isolated case study in the Lesser Antilles – indeed, shockingly, it may not even be the most Critically Endangered endemic bird in the region. Such a lamentable distinction could well be held by the majestic Imperial Parrot on Dominica, where deep in the dense and cloud-enshrouded montane forests of the 'Nature Isle' an unknown number continue to battle against the threats posed by foes both natural (hurricanes like Maria in 2017) and man-made (the illegal pet trade). Throughout the region, several other endemics such as the St Vincent Parrot, Whistling Warbler, St Lucia Black Finch, Barbuda Warbler and Montserrat Oriole also walk a precarious line between existence and oblivion.

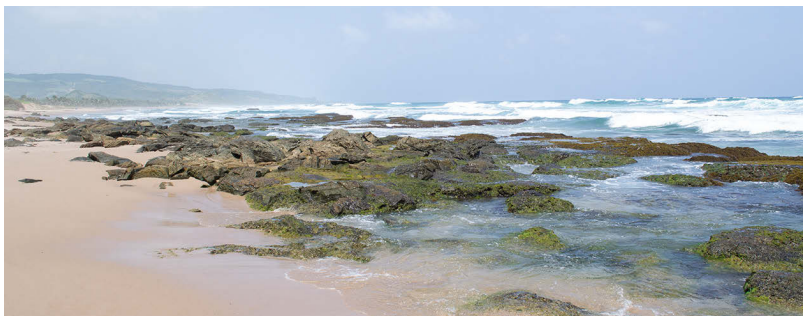
Yet, there is reason for hope and cause for optimism. Indeed, for inspiration, one need look no further than the success achieved on St Lucia, with her own endemic parrot's return from the brink. In the 1970s, following years of habitat destruction, hunting and capture for the illegal pet trade, the global population of the St Lucia Parrot fell to a paltry 100 individuals. However, following an intensive outreach and public awareness program by the St Lucia Department of Forestry, the establishment of a parrot reserve, and a ban on hunting, numbers have risen dramatically to the point where these beautiful parrots can once again be regularly seen coursing across the skies – every mesmeric beat of their spectacularly colourful wings against the unbroken backdrop of verdant rainforest, a resounding and emphatic reminder of what can be achieved when we make a concerted effort to preserve rather than destroy. Such success also underlies the critical importance of the continued efforts of organisations like the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation (providing crucial support to wildlife conservation on Dominica); conservation charities such as BirdsCaribbean, who raise awareness and empower local partners to build a region where people appreciate, conserve and benefit from thriving bird populations and ecosystems; and indeed to birding tour operators such as Birding the Islands, who directly support conservation efforts in the region through donations from their tours. The ability of organisations to speak and act on behalf of those who cannot, often means the difference between life and death for threatened species. For some birds in the Lesser Antilles, the clock is well and truly ticking.



KEY BIRDWATCHING HABITATS

Coast

Be sure to scan the ocean for the terns, gulls, boobies, pelicans and frigatebirds that are drawn primarily to southern and western shorelines. Check northern and eastern shores for shearwaters, skuas (called jaegers in North America), petrels and tropicbirds. Also explore beaches, tidal pools and exposed reefs for foraging waders and herons. Remote beaches also represent ideal nesting sites for resident waders such as Wilson's Plover.



Dry scrubland

On first glance, dry scrubland may not look particularly appealing as a wildlife habitat, but being largely composed of grasses, shrubs and drought-tolerant trees (most with a compound leaf structure), it can often be very rewarding for a number of flycatcher, wren, mockingbird, cuckoo, warbler, grassquit, nightjar and dove species.



Woodland (dry broadleaved forest)

A woodland patch filled with deciduous tree species is a haven for warblers in temperate regions, and the same is true in the tropics. A variety of migrant warblers seek out such sites while on the islands. Other species that thrive in this habitat include orioles, vireos, pigeons, doves and saltators. Be sure to scan the understorey carefully for wrens, thrashers and finches.



Wetlands

One of the most productive habitats for birding in the region. Mangrove swamps, saltmarshes, lakes and lily ponds all attract a plethora of species, including migrant waders and waterfowl, kingfishers and herons, and other aquatic birds such as grebes, gallinules and rails.



Montane forest

This is typically one of the more challenging habitats to access, but unquestionably one of the most rewarding in terms of possible sightings. With species of parrot, hummingbird, solitaire, euphonia, thrush, oriole and quail-dove often restricted to these higher elevations, it is well worth the effort of planning a visit.



Habitat edges

The point at which one habitat ends and another habitat begins can produce numerous species. For example, scan the treeline where woodland ends and grassland begins for thrashers, tremblers, warblers, flycatchers, hummingbirds and falcons.



Grassland

Vast expanses of native grassland are few and far between on most islands. However, the patches that remain are well worth visiting. Numerous species of swallow, finch, flycatcher and dove can thrive there.



Tropical forest

Ranging from lush, moist belts, to low-lying, sweltering, humid expanses, this most biodiverse of habitats in the region is home to a vast array of species. These include drab musicians such as Cocoa Thrush and House Wren but also showy characters like Montserrat Oriole and St Lucia Parrot.



KEY BIRDWATCHING SITES ON EACH ISLAND

ANGUILLA

EAST

East End Pond

(18°14'11.4"N 62°59'49.8"W)

Designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International, this 5-ha saltwater pond with its expanse of Button and Red Mangroves is a mecca for large flocks of migrant waders. These can include Willet, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Stilt Sandpiper, Black-necked Stilt, Snowy Plover, Semipalmated Plover and Kildeer. Resident and migrant waterfowl frequent the site, including Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, White-cheeked Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Northern Shoveler and American Wigeon. A variety of heron species nest there, while others use it as a feeding and rest stop during migration. These can include Great Egret, Green Heron, Tricolored Heron and Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night-herons.

NORTH

Prickly Pear East

(18°15'52.4"N 63°10'18.2"W)

and Prickly Pear West

(18°16'18.6"N 63°11'14.4"W)

The cays located just 8 km north of Anguilla represent a haven for seabirds. A visit there will almost certainly provide encounters with such species as Brown Booby, Red-billed Tropicbird, Magnificent Frigatebird, Sooty Tern, Bridled Tern,

Least Tern, Laughing Gull, Brown Pelican and an array of other ocean wanderers.

SAINT MARTIN/SINT MAARTEN

Saint Martin (the French side)

CENTRAL

Pic Paradis (18°04'30.2"N 63°02'58.0"W)

This is the highest peak on the island and supports the dry forest habitat that is home to numerous regional specialties such as Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Zenaida Dove, Grey Kingbird, Purple-throated Carib, Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Black-whiskered Vireo and Lesser Antillean Bullfinch. Also note the attractiveness of such habitat to migrant warblers, including Northern Parula, Black-and-white Warbler, Cape May Warbler and American Redstart.

EAST

Salines d'Orient

(18°04'50.0"N 63°01'06.5"W)

Lying to the west of Orient Bay is a vast wetland area offering one of the best sites on the island for encountering a veritable barrage of waders, including White-rumped Sandpiper, Snowy Plover, Grey Plover, Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, American Golden Plover, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone and Short-billed Dowitcher. Its proximity to the bay allows superb opportunities to observe Brown and Red-footed Boobies, along with several tern species, including Least, Sandwich and Royal.

Sint Maarten (the Dutch side)

CENTRAL

Great Salt Pond

(18°01'58.6"N 63°03'01.4"W)

A large lake and wetland area that attracts a host of migrant herons, Great Salt Pond is also of interest for numerous species of gull and tern due to its size. These include Roseate, Least and Royal Terns, along with Laughing Gull and the seldom seen Lesser Black-backed and Ring-billed Gulls. Both Pied-billed Grebe and Black-necked Stilt nest there, and the habitat is ideal for many migrant waders, including Semipalmated, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers and Whimbrel. A wide selection of regional species can also be found in habitat surrounding the pond – including Green-throated Carib and Pearly-eyed Thrasher – and the site is highly attractive to migrant warblers such as Magnolia and Palm Warblers and Northern Parula. The open water also draws in significant numbers of Barn, Cliff and Cave Swallows, along with Caribbean Martin.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Island of Antigua

NORTH

McKinnon's Salt Pond

(17°08'53.9"N 61°51'05.2"W)

Without question the best location on the island for views of herons, waders and waterfowl that are all reliant on this large mangrove waterbody located on the north-west coast. With such an optimum location on one of the more northerly of the Lesser Antillean islands, the selection of migrant waterfowl species can be wider here than on many of the islands further south, and includes Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler and Ring-necked

Duck. There is also the strong possibility (especially at dawn and dusk) for sightings of the rare breeding resident West Indian Whistling Duck and the more regionally common White-cheeked Pintail. Both Black-necked Stilt and Wilson's Plover nest on the sandy banks, and several migrant wader species forage in the shallow ponds. McKinnon's is a good site for migrant warblers with an affinity for habitat near water, and regular visitors include Northern Waterthrush, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart and Northern Parula. 'Golden Warbler', the resident subspecies of Yellow Warbler, is also present. Other year-round species of note in the area are White-crowned Pigeon and White-winged Dove, along with Common Gallinule, American Coot, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher, Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel and Black-faced Grassquit.

Island of Barbuda

WEST

River Road (17°36'11.1"N 61°49'44.7"W)

Barbuda is a very small and largely undeveloped island with one main road, Route 1 (also known as River Road), running from north to south. If you drive in either direction along this road and pause at any pond or body of water near the roadside, you have a good chance at the appropriate time of year of seeing a few migrant waders. These can include Solitary and Stilt Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitcher and several other species. Waterfowl in the larger ponds can include White-cheeked Pintail, Blue-winged Teal and American Wigeon. The scrubby vegetation and sparse woodland surrounding the waterbodies (especially in the vicinity of the Sir McChesney George Secondary School) should reveal a host of resident species, including the fairly

common endemic Barbuda Warbler, as well as Black-faced Grassquit, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher, Mangrove Cuckoo, Common Ground Dove, Caribbean Elaenia, White-winged Dove and Black-whiskered Vireo. Migrant warblers can also be found in such habitat.

NORTH

Codrington Lagoon National Park

(17°41'41.6"N 61°52'07.4"W)

Take a short boat ride from the city of Codrington to enjoy the truly amazing spectacle of being up close and personal with the colony of thousands of Magnificent Frigatebirds that nest in the mangroves bordering the lagoon. Also possible there are resident and migrant heron species such as Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-herons, and a selection of terns and gulls.

ST KITTS AND NEVIS

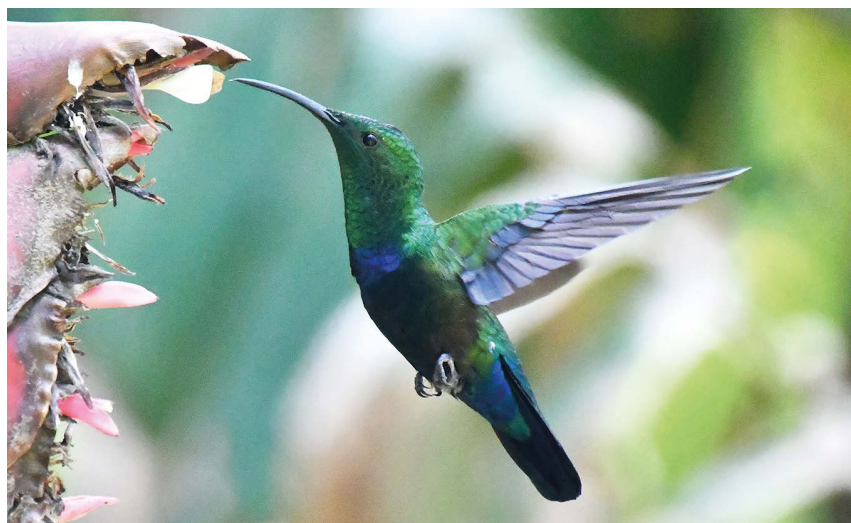
Island of St Kitts

SOUTH

Frigate Bay Pond

(17°17'02.2"N 62°41'17.4"W)

This stunning lagoon can be a very productive site for waders such as Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Stilt Sandpiper, along with a host of smaller species including Spotted, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers. Migrant and resident herons include Great Blue, Little Blue and Green Herons and Great Egret. Also drawn to this vast expanse of water are Common Gallinule, American Coot, Osprey, Belted Kingfisher and significant numbers of Black-necked Stilts. Other less numerous aquatic species can include Sora, Glossy Ibis and the very rarely seen Clapper Rail. The surrounding landscape is attractive for several non-aquatic breeding



The Green-throated Carib is a large species of hummingbird that is common throughout the region. Seen here feeding at a Heliconia flower.

residents, including Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, Black-faced Grassquit, Scaly-breasted Munia and Caribbean Elaenia.

Island of Nevis

CENTRAL

Golden Rock rainforest

(17°08'35.4"N 62°34'00.8"W)

To the south-east of towering Nevis Peak in St George Gingerland Parish is a lush forest. This is a site that represents a golden opportunity for birding. Drawn to such habitat are a host of species, including Scaly-naped Pigeon, Purple-throated Carib, Green-throated Carib, Bridled Quail-dove, Scaly-breasted Thrasher, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher and even the majestic Red-tailed Hawk. This site is also sought out by migrant warblers such as American Redstart and Black-and-white and Hooded Warblers.

MONTSERRAT

NORTH

Brades (16°47'34"N 62°12'38"W) and **St Peter Parish**

Birding on Montserrat is restricted to the north of the island, as vast areas of the south are located within the exclusion zone, an area deemed unsafe due to the threat of volcanic activity. Thankfully, Montserrat is one of the most densely forested islands in the region and a system of trails (some of which are signposted) run throughout these forests. Many of these (such as Blackwood Allen Hiking Trail, Dry Waterfall Trail and Oriole Trail) run through St Peter Parish in the lush mountainous areas south of Barzeys and Cudjoehead. Birding on the trails can be very rewarding and you will have opportunities for

sightings of the endemic Montserrat Oriole and other specialties such as Bridled Quail-dove and Forest Thrush, as well as more commonly seen forest inhabitants, including Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Scaly-breasted Thrasher, Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Purple-throated Carib and Pearly-eyed Thrasher. These forests are also the favoured haunts of many migrant species of North American warbler, including Louisiana Waterthrush, Magnolia and Black-throated Green Warblers and several others.

Little Bay (16°48'10.4"N 62°12'17.6"W)

This coastal port town with a jetty and sheltered bay is a good site for encounters with Red-billed Tropicbird, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, Brown Booby and several species of gull and tern.

GUADELOUPE

EAST

Pointe des Chateaux and La Grande Saline salt pond (16°14'48.0"N 61°10'39.0"W)

A great area to set up your scope and survey the ocean for seabirds is Pointe des Chateaux. This spit of land extends into the Atlantic and is located near the town of St François. Possibilities here include several tern species (Roseate, Common, Least, Bridled and others), Laughing and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, three species of jaeger (Pomarine, Long-tailed and Parasitic) and three species of booby (Brown, Masked and Red-footed). Keep an eye out, too, for Brown Noddy, Cory's, Audubon's and Manx Shearwaters, South Polar Skua, Red-billed and White-tailed Tropicbirds, Magnificent Frigatebird and Brown Pelican.

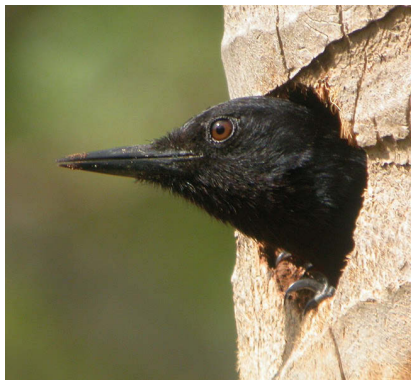
La Grande Saline salt pond is a fabulous location for observing migrant waders. Species can include Wilson's Plover and Least, Semipalmated and Solitary Sandpipers. Several introduced species that now breed on the island can also be found there, such as Scaly-breasted Munia and Orange-cheeked and Black-rumped Waxbills. During autumn migration, the vegetated and wooded areas attract migrant warblers including Blackpoll and Northern Waterthrush, along with other visitors such as Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Cliff, Cave and Barn Swallows are also known to mass at the site.

CENTRAL

Parc National de la Guadeloupe

(16°10'47.0"N 61°40'50.0"W)

Located just off of Highway D23 in Parc National de la Guadeloupe, and about a 30-minute drive west from Petit Bourg, is the Cascade aux Ecrevisses. This spectacular setting in the heart of dense primary forest, with its flowing streams and waterfalls, even has picnic tables for you to relax and bird while seated. If you arrive at this location at, or just before, dawn, you will be well placed to enjoy encounters with two of the most elusive species in the Lesser Antillean region: Forest Thrush and Bridled Quail-dove. Other noteworthy species regularly seen at this site include the endemic Guadeloupe Woodpecker, near-endemic Plumbeous Warbler, Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Brown Trembler, Lesser Antillean Pewee, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher and Lesser Antillean Swift (keep a close watch on the skies overhead). Several migrant warblers can also be seen in the forests of Parc National de la Guadeloupe, including Hooded and Chestnut-sided Warblers and American Redstart.



A Guadeloupe Woodpecker emerging from a nest cavity in a palm tree.

NORTH

Barrage de Gaschet

(16°25'10.9"N 61°28'52.7"W)

For migrant waders, waterfowl and herons, be sure to check out Barrage de Gaschet, located to the west of Highway N8. During the North American autumn and winter, the expansive waterbodies there are favoured by migrant Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Short-billed Dowitcher, Stilt and Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated and Grey Plovers and other waders. Species of duck that can be seen include Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Ruddy Duck and Black-bellied Whistling Duck. Numerous heron species also frequent the site, including Little Blue, Great Blue, Tricolored and Green Herons, Great Egret and Least Bittern. Other aquatic birds such as American Coot, Sora and Common and Purple Gallinules are also possible. Raptors can include Osprey and Peregrine Falcon. Other species to be seen are the introduced Red Avadavat and Scaly-breasted Munia, along with migrant warblers such as Blackpoll and Yellow Warblers.

DOMINICA

NORTH

Morne Diablotin National Park

(15°30'34.9"N 61°25'18.0"W)

The Syndicate Nature Trail that runs through this vast National Park, with its towering peaks and rivers flowing through large tracts of tropical forest and montane forest, is the best site on the island to encounter the critically endangered Imperial Parrot. The largest population of this endemic can be found in the dense forests on the north-eastern slopes of the park. Also present within the park and often seen along the Syndicate Trail is the other species of endemic *Amazona*, the stunning Red-necked Parrot. The trail also provides excellent opportunities for sightings of other breeding residents, including the near-endemic Blue-headed Hummingbird, Plumbeous Warbler and

Brown Trembler, the endemic subspecies of House Wren, Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Scaly-breasted Thrasher, Lesser Antillean Pewee, Lesser Antillean Saltator, Broad-winged Hawk and (especially at dawn and dusk) Forest and Red-legged Thrushes. If you are exceptionally fortunate, in the late evening you may even see Black-capped Petrel winging their way back to nesting sites that are suspected at high elevations in this park. Note that this expansive forested region also attracts migrant passerines (especially during autumn), including Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

WEST

Layout River (15°23'36.0"N 61°25'29.9"W)

During the North American autumn and winter months, the mouth and banks of this river can be especially productive for viewing a wide range of



The typically shy, forest-dwelling Bridled Quail-dove, is found on the islands from St Lucia north along the chain.

migrant waders, such as Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Spotted and Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Grey and Semipalmated Plovers. Kingfishers (both the resident Ringed and migrant Belted) and herons also patrol the banks of the river. The surrounding landscape provides good opportunities for viewing several regional specialities, such as Black-faced Grassquit, Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Carib Grackle and Lesser Antillean Bullfinch. The coastal area is also excellent for sightings of Brown Pelican, Royal Tern, Laughing Gull and several other seabirds.

MARTINIQUE

SOUTH

L'Etang des Salines (14°24'02.2"N 60°52'24.2"W)

Near the town of St Anne, take some time to visit the saltwater marsh of Etang des Salines for opportunities to see a host of migrant waders, including Semipalmated, Western and Spotted Sandpipers, Whimbrel, Wilson's Plover and Willet. In the surrounding landscape, there is also a good chance to see several of the introduced species that now breed on the island, including Orange-cheeked, Black-rumped and Common Waxbills. Other breeding residents found regularly in this area include Carib Grackle, Zenaida and Common Ground Doves, Tropical Mockingbird, Spectacled Thrush, 'Golden Warbler', Grassland Yellow-finch and Eared Dove.

NORTH AND CENTRAL

Forêt Pitons du Carbet (14°41'39.7"N 61°05'11.9"W)

Located south of Fonds-Saint-Denis, off Highway N3, the Carbet Mountains

are the most ancient on the island, and the lush, forested habitat, with its deep gullies and rivers, is one of the prime birding sites on the island. It provides ideal habitat for forest-loving birds such as the endemic Martinique Oriole, near-endemic Blue-headed Hummingbird, Purple-throated Carib, Broad-winged Hawk, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Solitaire, near-endemic Grey Trembler, Lesser Antillean Pewee, Spectacled Thrush, Lesser Antillean Euphonia and Ruddy Quail-dove.

EAST

Reserve Naturelle de la Caravelle (14°46'20.3"N 60°52'59.6"W)

The primarily dry forests and scrub of Presquière de la Caravelle represent some of the best sites on the island to see the near-endemic White-breasted Thrasher. Other specialities possible here include Lesser Antillean Saltator, Mangrove Cuckoo, Tropical Mockingbird, White-tailed Nightjar, Ruddy Quail-dove, Green-throated Carib, Black-whiskered Vireo, Caribbean Elaenia and Lesser Antillean Bullfinch. Seabirds along the coast include Magnificent Frigatebird, Royal, Roseate and Sandwich Terns, Brown Noddy and others. In autumn, migrant passerines such as Northern Waterthrush, Blackpoll, Kentucky and Prothonotary Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireo are possible.

ST LUCIA

SOUTH AND EAST

Mon Repos (13°52'48.1"N 60°53'49.5"W)

The dry broadleaved forests lining the coast road from Mon Repos to Dennery Bay harbour an array of species especially fond of this dry, scrubby

habitat, and include the endemic St Lucia Black Finch, St Lucia Oriole and St Lucia Pewee. The rare, near-endemic, White-breasted Thrasher, as well as Lesser Antillean Saltator, Mangrove Cuckoo, Bananaquit, Tropical Mockingbird, Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Grey Kingbird and Zenaida and Common Ground Doves can also all be found here. Further north along the east coast, open grassland areas can be rewarding sites for Rufous (aka St Lucia) Nightjar.

Moule-à-Chique (13°42'40.6"N 60°56'31.1"W)

From the plateau overlooking the international airport, watch for Red-billed Tropicbirds whistling by below you, as they visit their nesting sites along the cliff face. American Kestrel and Lesser Antillean Swift are sometimes sighted in the skies over the lighthouse. The wooded area at the base of the hill is also a good site for Scaly-breasted Thrasher and the endemic St Lucia Warbler.

WEST

Soufrière (13°51'24.6"N 61°03'32.7"W)

The blissful historic town of Soufrière, tucked away beneath the towering twin peaks of Les Pitons, is a good site at which to sit and watch the skies above for Magnificent Frigatebirds, Laughing Gulls, and Royal Terns. The dry, forested hills above the town represent one of the best locations on the island for Caribbean Elaenia and the endemic subspecies of House Wren. Lesser Antillean and Short-tailed Swifts are often drawn to the billowing updraughts synonymous with this mountainous region of the island and can regularly be seen wheeling and soaring over forested areas.

CENTRAL

Des Cartiers Rainforest (13°48'49.5"N 60°57'23.8"W)

In the car park, keep watch around the picnic tables for the highly inquisitive and (if you are eating) often opportunistic Lesser Antillean Bullfinch. If you take the trail from the car park towards the observation area, while en route be on the lookout for endemic St Lucia Oriole in the towering endemic Lansan trees and follow the ethereal call of Rufous-throated Solitaire and shriek of Broad-winged Hawk to their respective locations deep in the heart of the forest. Once at the observation point, look out across the valley for St Lucia Parrots flying by at or below eye level, or feeding in their favoured fruiting trees. The lush vegetation surrounding the viewing area is also a draw for Green-throated and Purple-throated Caribs, Bananaquit, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Grey Trembler, Lesser Antillean Flycatcher and, in the tangled canopy above, Lesser Antillean Euphonia.

BARBADOS

SOUTH

Chancery Lane Wetland (13°03'45.1"N 59°30'00.8"W)

Within the Button Mangroves, Bearded Fig Trees and wispy Casuarinas that broadly encircle this semi-natural wetland can be found a host of resident breeding species. These include 'Golden Warbler', the endemic Barbados Bullfinch, Black-whiskered Vireo, Zenaida Dove, Carib Grackle, Shiny Cowbird, Scaly-naped Pigeon and Caribbean Elaenia. Mudflats and shallow ponds ensure this site is also ideal for migratory North American waders, from



A Green Heron foraging in a shallow tidal pool on the east coast of Barbados.

Willet, Whimbrel, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Short-billed Dowitcher, to smaller waders such as Semipalmated, Spotted, White-rumped and Least Sandpipers. From late September, Belted Kingfisher and species of migrant waterfowl, such as Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup and American Wigeon start to arrive, adding to the number of aquatic species present year-round (which include Green Heron, Common Gallinule and American Coot). This wetland is primarily rain-dependent and hosts the greatest number of birds between July and November when the pond levels are at heights capable of sustaining the widest variety of species. Note also that the surrounding grasslands are ideal for Grassland Yellow-finch and attract migrant swallows, along with the breeding Caribbean Martin.

Graeme Hall Swamp (13°04'21.0"N 59°34'41.1"W)

The largest expanse of mangrove wetland on the island harbours a wealth of both resident and migrant species. At the time of writing, however, the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary is closed, and the remainder of the swamp will prove difficult to explore. Plans for a national park are in discussion, though, and would make the site far more accessible, with wading birds especially standing to benefit from the proposed creation of mudflats within the park. As things stand, a short north-south track runs along the east-west border separating the public lands of the Graeme Hall Swamp and private lands of the Nature Sanctuary. A walk along this can produce migrant herons such as Little Blue and Tricolored, along with resident Cattle, Snowy and

Little Egrets and Green Heron. Other aquatic species at this site include Sora, Common Gallinule and, on occasion, Purple Gallinule. This can also be a rewarding site during autumn migration for sightings of visiting North American warblers, including Northern Waterthrush, Blackpoll and Prothonotary Warblers. This location is also favoured year-round habitat for a significant population of the island's resident 'Golden Warblers'.

EAST

Bayfield Pond (13°10'00.9"N 59°27'09.1"W)

Tucked away in the tiny village of Bayfield in St Philip is a small lily pond that can be particularly rewarding for such breeding residents as Masked Duck and Common Gallinule. Eared Dove, Caribbean Elaenia, Grey Kingbird and Common Ground Dove are regularly seen in the vicinity.

Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge

(13°06'06.4"N 59°29'56.5"W)

This former 'shooting swamp' – that is, a site where hunters once targeted arriving flocks of waders – is now maintained primarily to attract and provide a feeding and rest stop for waders during migration. The peak migratory months of July to October can see Woodbourne host an array of species, including Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Grey and American Golden Plovers, Short-billed Dowitcher, Pectoral, Solitary and Least Sandpipers, Wilson's Snipe and many more. Also known to frequent this site are Black-crowned Night-heron, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Green Heron and Common Gallinule.

ST VINCENT

SOUTH AND WEST

Buccament Valley and the **Vermont Nature Trail** (13°12'19.3"N 61°12'45.1"W)

With over 250 species in its flora, this lush, forested valley is a terrific location for sightings of the endemic St Vincent Parrot. The Vermont Nature Trail represents an ideal means of accessing this area. The peak activity times for the parrots tend to be at dawn and dusk, with birds either setting off from, or returning to, their roosts (fewer sightings are logged during the heat of the day). Listen for these vocal parrots calling as they fly between fruiting trees and scan the branches for sightings. A plethora of regional specialties can also be seen here, including Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Caribbean Elaenia, Spectacled Thrush, Brown Trembler and Scaly-breasted Thrasher.

NORTH

La Soufrière

Take the La Soufrière Cross-Country Trail, starting at the Rabacca trailhead, for your best chance of sightings of the extremely rare and localised endemic Whistling Warbler. As you ascend the trail listen for the bird's tell-tale and remarkably loud, whistled song. The species is fond of foraging amongst the tangled mosses that cling to the trunks of mature trees, and within stands of heliconia. This lush forest is also home to a host of other species and, as you walk along the trail, take advantage of gaps in the vegetation to enjoy sightings of the near-endemic Grenada Flycatcher, and Lesser Antillean Tanager, Rufous-throated Solitaire, dark morph Bananaquit, all three hummingbird species found on the island, the endemic