

CUBA – Guardalavaca (30th Dec 2006 – 6th Jan 2007)

I spent 7 days in a big resort in Guardalavaca (Hotel Sol Rio de Luna y Mares) for a relaxing holiday but could not resist to explore the nearby nature and do some birding by myself. Almost all the observations are made around the resorts (except a day trip to Santiago de Cuba), along the coastline (mangroves) and in the nearby dry forest and fields. There were 2 very birdy lagoons: a big one between the 2 main resorts, with a bridge in between and another small one more interesting one left to the Viewpoint Cape (el Mirador).



Sea View

Least Grebe - *Tachybaptus dominicus*

Seen in a small brackish lagoon. 2 adults feeding a young striped *pullus*. Max 7 adults seen.

Brown Pelican - *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Singles along the coast. Daily.

Magnificent Frigatebird - *Fregata magnificens*

1 bird far from the coast in open sea.

Great Blue Heron - *Ardea herodias*

Seen daily in the big lagoon between the resorts. Max 5 birds together.

Great Egret - *Ardea alba*
Common. Max 35 birds.

Reddish Egret - *Egretta rufescens*
3 single birds in the big lagoon.

Tricolored Heron - *Egretta tricolor*
Seen twice in the mangroves along the coast.

Little Blue Heron - *Egretta caerulea*
Daily in low numbers.

Snowy Egret - *Egretta thula*
Daily in low numbers.



Great Egret

Cattle Egret - *Bubulcus ibis*
Widespread. Most common bird seen.

Green Heron - *Butorides virescens*
Daily seen or heard. Max 5

Black-crowned Night-Heron - *Nycticorax nycticorax*
Seen twice at dawn. 1 ad and 1 juv.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - *Nyctanassa violacea*
Daily. 1 to 3 adults at dawn.

(Caribbean) Greater Flamingo - *Phoenicopterus ruber*
9 adults in the lagoon + 3 in flight.

West Indian Whistling-Duck - *Dendrocygna arborea*
10 noisy birds in the small lagoon.



View of the small lagoon

Wood Duck - *Aix sponsa*
2 females/immatures in the big lagoon.

American Wigeon - *Anas americana*
7 birds seen.

White-cheeked Pintail - *Anas bahamensis*
3 beautiful adults in the small lagoon in a flock with Am. Wigeons and Blue-winged Teals.

Blue-winged Teal - *Anas discors*
Common. Max 35 birds in the small lagoon.

Turkey Vulture - *Cathartes aura*
Widespread and common.



Turkey Vulture

Crested Caracara - *Caracara cheriway*
1 in flight.

American Kestrel - *Falco sparverius*
About 10 single birds seen along the road to Santiago.

Merlin - *Falco columbarius*
Seen twice, probably the same bird. Chasing bats at dusk around the resort.

Helmeted Guineafowl - *Numida meleagris*
2 birds in the dry forest. Introduced species.

Common Moorhen - *Gallinula chloropus*
Common in the lagoons.

American Coot - *Fulica Americana*
Common in the small lagoon. Max 35

Black-necked Stilt - *Himantopus mexicanus*
4 adults.

Killdeer - Charadrius vociferous
15 noisy birds in a field.

Solitary Sandpiper - Tringa solitaria
2 in a flooded field close Guardalavaca village.

Spotted Sandpiper - Actitis macularia
Observed daily.

Laughing Gull - Larus atricilla
Few seen daily along the shore.

Royal Tern - Sterna maxima
Singles along the shore. Daily

White-crowned Pigeon - Patagioenas leucocephala
Daily in the mangroves. Max 6 birds.

Mourning Dove - Zenaida macroura
Common.



Laughing Gulls

Zenaida Dove - Zenaida aurita
1 bird in the dry forest.

Common Ground-Dove - Columbina passerine
Common.

Great Lizard-Cuckoo - *Saurothera merlini*

1 beautiful singing bird in the garden of the resort.

Smooth-billed Ani - *Crotophaga ani*

Common. Max 20 birds together. Always in small groups.

Antillean Palm-Swift - *Tachornis phoenicobia*

In Santiago about 10 birds in a palm tree plantation.



Palm Trees

Cuban Emerald - *Chlorostilbon ricordii*

3 singles males + 2 in flight.

Belted Kingfisher - *Ceryle alcyon*

Very common and noisy.

Cuban Tody - *Todus multicolor*

1 in the mangroves.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - *Sphyrapicus varius*

2 birds seen.

Cuban Green Woodpecker - *Xiphidiopicus percussus*

Seen twice. 1 couple and 1 male.

Loggerhead Kingbird - *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*

Very common.

Tree Swallow - *Tachycineta bicolor*
Seen twice. Max flock 30.

Cave Swallow - *Petrechelidon fulva*
Flock of about 30 under a bridge of a big artificial fresh water lake along the road to Santiago.

Northern Mockingbird - *Mimus polyglottos*
Very common.



Red-legged Thrush

Red-legged Thrush - *Turdus plumbeus*
Very common.

Cuban Vireo - *Vireo gundlachii*
5 Singles.

Northern Parula - *Parula americana*
Seen daily.

Yellow Warbler - *Dendroica petechia*
Singles observed every day.

Magnolia Warbler - *Dendroica magnolia*
3 singles observed.

Cape May Warbler - *Dendroica tigrina*
3 singles observed.

Black-throated Blue Warbler - *Dendroica caerulescens*
Seen daily. Common

Yellow-rumped Warbler - *Dendroica coronata*
2 birds observed.

Prairie Warbler - *Dendroica discolor*
Singles observed every day.

Palm Warbler - *Dendroica palmarum*
Very common in the gardens of the resorts.

Black-and-white Warbler - *Mniotilta varia*
Common seen daily.



Mangroves

American Redstart - *Setophaga ruticilla*
Observed daily. Singles.

Ovenbird - *Seiurus aurocapilla*
2 birds in the dry forest.

Northern Waterthrush - *Seiurus noveboracensis*
Singles in the mangroves.

Hooded Warbler - *Wilsonia citrine*
1 beautiful male in the flooded forest.

Stripe-headed Tanager - *Spindalis zena*
1 couple in the dry forest, apparently collecting nest material.

Cuban Grassquit - *Tiaris canora*
5 birds in a mixed flock with Yellow-faced Grassquit in the hotel gardens.

Yellow-faced Grassquit - *Tiaris olivacea*
Observed or heard every day. Max 15.

Tawny-shouldered Blackbird - *Agelaius humeralis*
1 in the hotel.

Eastern Meadowlark - *Sturnella magna*
3 singing birds in a field.

Cuban Blackbird - *Dives atrovioacea*
Common around the resort.

Greater Antillean Grackle - *Quiscalus niger*
Common around the resort in mixed flock with Cuban Blackbirds.

Black-cowled Oriole - *Icterus dominicensis*
Only 1 bird in the bush.

House Sparrow - *Passer domesticus*
Observed every day at the resort in small numbers.

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