



Puerto Rico

13 -17 May 2019

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Introduction

As part of our Round the World trip we visited Puerto Rico for 3,5 days in between the Dominican Republic and North Carolina (US). All Puerto Rican endemics are easily found within 2 days (with a very tight schedule you even might see all of them in a single day). With plenty of time during our stay we also visited the east side of the island for the 2 Lesser Antilles Hummingbirds (Crested Hummingbird and Green-throated Carib). The devastation of the hurricane is still clearly visible but only the 2 Hummingbirds on the east side seem to have suffered severely. All Puerto Rican endemics are still easily found. Overall traveling is easy and location are within a short drive from each other making Puerto Rico a very nice and easy trip. For some photos see <https://photos.app.goo.gl/HkqFhzyASFTtgVjs6>

Itinerary

Day 1	Monday 13 May	Flight Santo Domingo to San Juan (arrival at 3.15pm) – drive to Arecibo
Day 2	Tuesday 14 May	Rio Abajo State Forest – Laguna Cartagena – Cabo Rojo (night at Guanica)
Day 3	Wednesday 15 May	Maricoa State Forest – Cabo Rojo – Guanica State Forest (night at Guanica)
Day 4	Thursday 16 May	Laguna Cartagena – drive to Fajardo – Cabeza de San Juan (night at Fajardo)
Day 5	Friday 17 May	Cabeza de San Juan – drive to airport – flight at 2.40pm to Charlotte (US)

What would we do different in hindsight

You only have to visit 4 birding spots to see all endemics: Rio Abajo, Maricoa State Forest, Cabo Rojo and Guanica State Forest. Additionally, we visited Laguna Cartagena (in a try for Masked Duck and Yellow-breasted Crake which we both dipped) and Fajardo for the 2 Lesser Antilles Hummingbirds (which we did see). Since all places are at a short drive of each other we visited some places twice to see all targets.



1. Rio Abajo
2. Maricao State Forest
3. Cabo Rojo
4. Guanica State Forest
5. Laguna Cartagena
6. Fajardo

Practicalities

Guiding

We used no guides. All places are easy to bird independently

Literature

We mostly used the Merlin Bird ID app which has a good and complete Bird Pack for the Caribbean. On top of that we used the Birds of the West Indies (as ebook).

In preparation the trip reports of Gallardy (2016) and Merrill (2016) were very useful. During our stay we also relied heavily on ebird for recent sightings.

Travelling

We hired a midsize car with Europe Car. After a short shuttle bus at the airport we received a Toyota Corolla. Driving around the island was straight forward, you notice directly that you are in the US.

Eating & Sleeping

We arranged all accommodation through Booking.com, often making a reservation on the arrival day which worked out fine. In Guanica we stayed at the Tropical Inn (Parador Guanica 1929) which was a good location to reach all birding spots in the South-West of the island. The last night we stayed at the Fajardo Inn, a bit expensive but based on ebird there were a lot of Carib sightings in the garden which worked out (we found a Carib nest in the garden).

Weather

We had perfect sunny weather during our stay, although it was very hot and humid in the middle of the day.

Health and safety

We felt safe throughout the entire trip. We did not drink tap water however we did experience get a bit of an upset stomach for a day, this could have been a cold fruit smoothie we bought.

Money

Since Puerto Rico is part of the US you can conveniently pay in dollars. Credit cards are widely accepted.

Costs

We spend 236 euros on the car rental and another 230 euro pp on accommodation, food, gas etc.

Visited Sites

We took a few GPS points of sites and specific birds, those are available here

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1BkF5rZNZcp4hr0LM2bm9T0j631eGFw6D&usp=sharing> and can also be requested in e.g. .kml (for Google Earth), .gpx (for GPS devices and GPS software) format.

Rio Abajo

The only place where you can see Puerto Rican Parrot. We followed the instructions in earlier trip reports and parked at the first yellow gate just after dawn (gps 18.3307, -66.7067). The gate was open but we were not sure if we were allowed to drive further. We decided to walk which was fine since this gave the opportunity to do some more birding on the way. We walked on the paved road to the second gate (gps 18.3321, -66.7177) and already on our way heard the Parrot. At the gate we could hear several Parrots and at some point 2 birds landed in a tree not too far. On the way we had our only Puerto Rican Vireo of the trip (18.32831, -66.71347).

Maricao State Forest

This State Forest is at a somewhat higher altitude and therefore provides some endemics that can only be found here. Puerto Rican Tanager and Elfin-woods Warbler were common when we got out of the car at km 16.8 (gps 18.1568, -66.9979) At this point we were almost done with all targets of which Puerto Rican Pewee took the longest time to find.

Guanica State Forest

Best place to search for Puerto Rican Nightjar at dusk. We walked up from the gate at the end of the day (note that the gate closes at 4pm for cars.) Adelaide's Warbler was common here. There were several Nightjars calling at dusk (gps 17.9819, -66.8791) and it did not take long before we had one in our spotlight. On walk back several Puerto Rican Screech-owls were calling but we failed to get one into view.

Cabo Rojo

Caribbean Eleania is very common along to road to the lighthouse. Although it was extremely hot and quiet when we visited in the afternoon we found one within 1 minute of getting out of the car. Clapper Rail didn't show the first time we visited around noon along the mangroves at (gps 17.9656, -67.1788). The second time it was later in the afternoon and this time 2 Rails responded within a minute. Both times we visited we saw several Yellow-shouldered Blackbirds flying by and hanging around in the gardens in the small village. This saved us a trip to Parguera (where birdwatchers used to try for the Blackbird at the Hardware store).

Laguna Cartagena

A lake that sometimes holds Masked Duck and Yellow-breasted Crake. We tried two times but without luck although it is still a nice place for waterfowl (for example a group of West Indian Whistling Ducks was present both times). On the drive to the lake we had our first of several Puerto Rican Flycatchers (gps 18.0137, -67.1090)

Fajardo

Around this touristy town on the east side of the island used to be many places to see Crested Hummingbird and Green-throated Carib. Both species have clearly declined after the hurricane (based on ebird sightings) but luckily we still managed to find both of them. For the Carib we saw some sightings in the gardens of the Fajardo Inn Resort and after a walk around the garden we found one sitting on a nest close to the midget golf (gps 18.3336, -65.6359) For the Crested Hummingbird we visited the road along the coast Cabeza de San Juan both in the afternoon and the next morning. The second we were lucky and found a Crested Hummingbird coming to the small pinkish flowers along the coast (gps 18.3707, -65.6324).

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST

We have tried to accurately indicate the proper subspecies for all our observations, usually based on geographic locations based on the IOC World Bird List version 6.4. We tried to keep detailed notes throughout the trip but especially commoner species might not have been written down daily. Triplist generated with iGoterra trips, see www.igoterra.com for details. In my view the best listing software/website!

- 1 **West Indian Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna arborea* NT
15 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 2 **White-cheeked Pintail** *Anas bahamensis bahamensis*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 3 **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*
5 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 4 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 4 **Antillean Nighthawk** *Chordeiles gundlachii*
1 2019-05-15, 1 heard Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 5 **Puerto Rican Nightjar** *Antrostomus noctitherus* EN Lifer
1 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15, 4 heard Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 6 **Green Mango** *Anthracothorax viridis* Lifer
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 2 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 7 **Green-throated Carib** *Eulampis holosericeus holosericeus*
1 Fajardo 2019-05-16
- 8 **Antillean Crested Hummingbird** *Orthorhyncus cristatus exilis*
1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 9 **Puerto Rican Emerald** *Chlorostilbon maugaeus* Lifer
3 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14
- 10 **Smooth-billed Ani** *Crotophaga ani*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 11 **Mangrove Cuckoo** *Coccyzus minor*
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 12 **Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo** *Coccyzus vieilloti* Lifer
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 1 heard Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 1 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15, 1 heard Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15

- 13 **White-crowned Pigeon** *Patagioenas leucocephala* NT
2 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15, 1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 14 **Scaly-naped Pigeon** *Patagioenas squamosa*
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 15 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 15 **Common Ground Dove** *Columbina passerina portoricensis*
5 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 16 **Ruddy Quail-dove** *Geotrygon montana montana*
1 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 17 **Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura macroura*
3 2019-05-15
- 18 **White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica asiatica*
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 30 2019-05-14, 15 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15, 1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 19 **Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans caribaeus*
2 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15
- 20 **Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 21 **Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata cerceris*
10 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 15 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 22 **American Coot** *Fulica americana americana*
4 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 10 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 23 **Limpkin** *Aramus guarauna elucus*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 24 **Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps antillarum*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 25 **Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus mexicanus*
10 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15, 3 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 26 **Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia wilsonia*
1 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-14
- 27 **Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus ternominatus*
2 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 1 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15, 2 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 28 **Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*
1 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15
- 29 **Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla*
10 2019-05-16
- 30 **Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus*
2 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15
- 31 **Cabot's Tern** *Thalasseus acutiflavus acutiflavus*
40 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15

- 32 **Least Tern** *Sternula antillarum*
1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 33 **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii dougallii*
1 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15
- 34 **White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus catesbyi*
4 2019-05-16
- 35 **Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens*
6 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 36 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
2 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 4 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15
- 37 **Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis exilis*
2 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 3 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 38 **Green Heron** *Butorides virescens virescens*
1 2019-05-14, 5 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 39 **Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
50 2019-05-14, 50 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15
- 40 **Great Egret** *Ardea alba egretta*
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 41 **Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor ruficollis*
1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 42 **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula thula*
1 2019-05-16
- 43 **Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*
5 2019-05-14, 1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 44 **Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*
50 2019-05-14, 10 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 45 **Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*
1 2019-05-14, 1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14
- 46 **Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus venator*
1 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 47 **Broad-winged Hawk** *Buteo platypterus brunnescens*
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14
- 48 **Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis*
3 2019-05-14
- 49 **Puerto Rican Screech Owl** *Megascops nudipes nudipes*
1 heard Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 50 **Puerto Rican Tody** *Todus mexicanus* Lifer
2 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 5 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15

- 51 **Puerto Rican Woodpecker** *Melanerpes portoricensis* Lifer
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 3 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 2 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 52 **American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius caribaeorum*
1 2019-05-15, 4 2019-05-16
- 53 **Puerto Rican Amazon** *Amazona vittata vittata* CR
6 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 4 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14
- 54 **Caribbean Elaenia** *Elaenia martinica riisii*
1 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15, 1 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-15
- 55 **Lesser Antillean Pewee** *Contopus latirostris blancoi*
1 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 56 **Grey Kingbird** *Tyrannus dominicensis dominicensis*
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 10 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 5 PR303 Lajas Rice Fields 2019-05-15
- 57 **Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus caudifasciatus taylori*
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 1 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 58 **Puerto Rican Flycatcher** *Myiarchus antillarum* Lifer
1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-14, 1 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-14, 1 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 59 **Puerto Rican Vireo** *Vireo latimeri* Lifer
3 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 1 heard Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 60 **Black-whiskered Vireo** *Vireo altiloquus altiloquus*
10 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 3 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 61 **Caribbean Martin** *Progne dominicensis*
2 2019-05-13, 1 2019-05-15, 1 2019-05-16
- 62 **Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos orpheus*
3 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-14, 2 2019-05-15, 1 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 63 **Pearly-eyed Thrasher** *Margarops fuscatus fuscatus*
4 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15, 1 Fajardo 2019-05-17
- 64 **Red-legged Thrush** *Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus*
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 10 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 65 **Puerto Rican Tanager** *Nesospingus speculiferus* Lifer
15 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 66 **Puerto Rican Spindalis** *Spindalis portoricensis* Lifer
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 5 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15, 1 2019-05-16
- 67 **Puerto Rican Oriole** *Icterus portoricensis* Lifer
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 2 2019-05-15
- 68 **Yellow-shouldered Blackbird** *Agelaius xanthomus xanthomus* EN
4 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-14
- 69 **Greater Antillean Grackle** *Quiscalus niger brachypterus*
1 2019-05-13, 20 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-14

- 70 **Elfin Woods Warbler** *Setophaga angelae* EN Lifer
5 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15
- 71 **American Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga aestiva*
1 Cabo Rojo 2019-05-14
- 72 **Adelaide's Warbler** *Setophaga adelaidae* Lifer
1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 5 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 73 **Bananaquit** *Coereba flaveola portoricensis*
1 Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 50 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 10 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-14
- 74 **Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivaceus bryanti*
1 Guánica State Forest 2019-05-15
- 75 **Black-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris bicolor omissus*
4 Laguna Cartagena 2019-05-16
- 76 **Puerto Rican Bullfinch** *Loxigilla portoricensis portoricensis*
1 heard Camberlache SF 2019-05-13, 1 Rio Abajo SF 2019-05-14, 5 Maricao State Forest 2019-05-15